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CHURCH IN IRELAND.

A SECOND CHAPTER  
OF  
CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

BY  
THOMAS ANDREWS, M.D., F.R.S.

AUTHOR OF THE 'STUDIUM GENERALE.'

LONDON:  
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.  
1869.

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L. R. Carlson



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*Ecclesiastical History.—Religious Communion.—Their Present State.—Their Relations to Industry.—The Church Question.—Its Equitable Settlement.—The Social State of the Country.—Religious Antipathies.—Future Prospects of Ireland.*

THE proposal, so unexpectedly brought forward in the late Parliament, and sanctioned by one branch of the Legislature, to sever the State from any form of religion in Ireland, has already stirred up feelings throughout the nation, which show that greater interests are at stake than those of the Irish Church. Even regarded as a local question, its magnitude gives to it imperial importance; the fortunes of England being so interwoven with those of her less favoured sister, that any measure tending, on the one hand to elevate, or on the other to depress, the condition of Ireland, cannot fail to produce a lasting influence upon the empire at large. Nor can it be doubted that the old endowments, which, with all their faults, have conferred vast benefits on the English people, will be seriously imperilled, if this Irish question be turned adrift, and allowed to settle itself as best it may, according to the impulse of the moment, and with reference to the temporary exigencies of party rather than to the permanent interests of the country.

It is with some hesitation that the writer of these pages has ventured to enter upon the thorny field of Irish

politics and Irish polemics; in treading over it, he will endeavour to avoid irrelevant topics, and to give the reader, who may favour him with his attention, a short, but impartial sketch of the past history, and present condition, of the great religious communities of Ireland, as being essential to a due consideration of the whole subject. He will afterwards not shrink from stating, in plain and intelligible language, how this question of the Irish Church must, in his opinion, be eventually settled, if discontent and turbulence are to be banished from the soil of Ireland, and the inhabitants of the British Islands knit into a compact and united people.

The authentic history of Ireland can scarcely be traced farther back than the fifth century of our era. Unhappily for the future fortunes of the country, the Roman legions were not carried across the Irish sea. Ireland escaped the yoke of the Empire; but she lost the advantages of its civilisation and laws. While England was covered with Roman villas, and traversed by Roman causeways, Ireland was in a state of helpless barbarism. The arrival in 431 of Palladius, a bishop consecrated by Pope Celestine, is the first event, of which we have any clear record, in the ecclesiastical history of Ireland. He was succeeded, according to the Irish annals, by Patricius or Patrick, whose missionary labours have been celebrated and claimed, with praiseworthy emulation, alike by Catholic and Protestant divines. The silence of the contemporary historian, Prosper of Aquitaine, and of Bede, in his 'Ecclesiastical History,' casts unfortunately a deep shade of doubt over the whole narrative.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The history of St. Patrick rests on the doubtful authority of the Irish annalists, and on two documents, of questionable authenticity, attributed to the saint himself. I would not have referred either to the 'Confession of St. Patrick,' or to the 'Epistle to Coroticus,' had not a distinguished prelate lately made a statement, on the authority of the former, which, if unexplained, is likely to mislead. In order to prove an identity of practice, in one respect, between the Irish Church in the days of St. Patrick, and the existing

The history of the early Irish Church, as far as it can be gleaned from imperfect and doubtful records, is the history of the planting of monastic institutions, among a savage and barbarous people. St. Bridgid, who died about the year 522, and is said to have been a contemporary of St. Patrick, founded, according to her biographer, a monastery at Kildare, which became the head of all the Irish churches, and ‘a pinnacle towering above all the monasteries of the Scots.’ By a singular arrangement, she associated in her labours a holy man, who governed the Church with her in episcopal dignity, so that ‘her chair, both episcopal and virginal, established itself in the whole Hibernian Island.’<sup>1</sup>

Protestant Church, the Bishop of Oxford lately declared in the House of Lords, that St. Patrick was the son of one married clergyman, and the grandson of another. He ought in candour to have added, that the only authorities on the subject are wholly at variance. In the ‘Confession,’ St. Patrick describes himself as the son of a deacon, who was himself the son of a presbyter; in the ‘Epistle to Coroticus,’ he says that he is of gentle birth according to the flesh, his father a decurion, and that, for the sake of others, he sold his nobility. The name of Patricius, as well as the popular legends, are favourable to the latter statement. I do not wish, at the same time, to attach any undue importance to either of these documents. A recent writer has attempted to alter the barbarous texts, so as to bring the language of the ‘Confession’ into agreement with that of the ‘Epistle;’ but with little success. The opinion of the learned Ledwich, that there is no evidence of such a person as St. Patrick having ever lived in Ireland, and that his history is one of the most contemptible of fictions, goes perhaps somewhat too far; although a recent writer in Germany has also pronounced the writings ascribed to St. Patrick to be fictitious, and the accounts of his life fabulous. I am, at the same time, constrained to acknowledge, that the arguments adduced against the existence of the historical St. Patrick of the fifth century are most cogent, and have never been satisfactorily answered. The more, indeed, we attempt to obtain a distinct view of the saint and his achievements, the farther they recede from our sight; and, in spite of the efforts of clerical and national admirers, the eventful life of St. Patrick must, it is to be feared, disappear sooner or later from the page of history, and his memory be enshrined, along with that of other heroes of the same order, among the grand, but shadowy, figures of a semi-legendary period.

<sup>1</sup> Todd’s *Memoir of St. Patrick*. Such was the Church from which the Protestant Church of Ireland claims succession and inheritance! It cannot refuse to accept, as part of this inheritance, the prodigies and miracles of the reputed founders of the same Church. The allegation that the ancient churches

With St. Columba, the founder of the church of Iona, or Hi, we touch firmer ground. This famous monk, a native of a wild district of Donegal, was born about the year 521, and the account of his early training, in different monasteries of Ireland, shows that monastic institutions were already scattered over the country, from the Lough of Strangford to the banks of the Liffey. St. Columba founded, in Ireland, the church of Derry and the monastery of Dairmag; but it was on Scottish soil that he reared an imperishable monument to his name. With only twelve attendants he passed over, in the forty-second year of his age, to the West of Scotland; and having obtained a grant of the island of Hi (Iona), he founded there a monastery, of which he was the first abbot. By his labours, Christianity was first introduced among the Northern Picts of Scotland, and, amidst the dreary annals

of these islands professed a purer form of Christianity, and one more resembling the existing Protestant Church, than the Church of Rome, at the same period, is not warranted by the ancient records. The Scots and Britons had, it is true, a dispute with the Church of Rome on two ceremonial points, the tonsure and the time of observing Easter. No one will maintain that the ancient Irish tonsure has been preserved in the modern church; and with regard to the time of observing Easter, this church is unfortunately itself also on the wrong side. It observes Easter, according to the custom of the Church of Rome, and not according to the custom of the ancient Scots and Britons. To render this claim valid, the Church of the Reformation ought to have reverted to the custom of the early Christian inhabitants of these islands, in which they claimed to follow the example of John the Evangelist, and his disciple Polycarp. As regards the identity, in faith and doctrine, of the British churches, in the early part of the fifth century, with the rest of Christendom, the testimony of Chrysostom will be accepted as conclusive. 'Whether thou journeyest to the people of India,' exclaims the eloquent Father, 'whom the rising sun first beholds, or to the Ocean, or sailest to yonder British Isles, or to the Euxine Sea, or journeyest to the countries of the South; everywhere shalt thou hear all men inquiring into the things contained in the Scripture; in diverse language, but not with diverse faith; in varied tongue, but with an accordant mind.' *Κάν πρὸς Ἰνδοὺς ἀπέλθης οὐς πρῶτους ἀνίσχων ὁ ἥλιος ὁρᾷ, κἂν εἰς τὸν ὠκεανὸν ἀπέλθης, κἂν πρὸς τὰς Βρετανικὰς νήσους ἐκείνας, κἂν εἰς τὸν Εὐξείνιον πλεῖσθης πόντον, κἂν πρὸς τὰ νότια ἀπέλθης μέρη, πάντων ἀκούσῃ πανταχοῦ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς Γραφῆς φιλοσοφούντων, φωνῇ μὲν ἑτέρᾳ, πίστει δὲ οὐχ ἑτέρᾳ, καὶ γλώσσῃ μὲν διαφόρῃ, διανοίᾳ δὲ συμφώνῃ.*—Chrysostomi Opera, ed. Par. iii. 86.

of Ireland, it is pleasing to record, on unquestionable testimony, that to an Irish monk, is chiefly due the credit of reclaiming the early inhabitants of Scotland from the practice of barbaric rites, and of teaching them the mild precepts of Christianity. St. Columba was a man of great vigour of mind, and to the qualities of the ecclesiastic, he united those of the poet and soldier. He may almost be said to have stamped his character on the great nation among whom he settled, and who still visit with interest the primitive scene of his labours.<sup>1</sup>

The monks of Ireland cultivated, with singular success, the scholastic learning, which prevailed in the eighth and

<sup>1</sup> *Bede, Adamnan.* The life of St. Columba, by Adamnan, who was one of his successors at Hi, has been published by the Celtic Society, and edited with great care by Dr. Reeves. The derivation of the Scots of Caledonia from an Irish stock rests on much weaker evidence than the mission of Columba, although stoutly maintained by an imposing array of antiquarians, from Ussher and Ware down to the present time. I have examined, with some care, the allusions to this subject in the ancient writers, without being able to discover any clear proof of the Scots of Scotland having been originally a colony from Ireland. Scottish tribes (*gentes Scotorum*) figure on the soil of Scotland as early, at least, as on that of Ireland, and, at the later period of the Roman power in Britain, we find them settled in both countries. But as the Scots were distinct from the Pictish inhabitants of Scotland, so they also appear to have been distinct from the Hibernian inhabitants of Ireland, and to have settled especially in its northern districts. In the twelfth century, the distinction between Pict and Scot in Scotland had disappeared, the Scot was even at that time, in Ireland, distinct from the Hibernian. In the *Life of Malachy*, by St. Bernard, the celebrated abbot of Clairvaux, we find the following passage. 'Ita ut ad eum Scoti, Hibernique confluerent, et tanquam unus omnium pater ab omnibus coleretur' (*Bernardi Opera*, i. 1079). Not only did the Scots and Hibernians resort to Malachy, but they all rendered obeisance to him, as their common father. It would be foreign to my purpose to enter more fully into the discussion of this question. I will only add that my inquiries confirm the conclusions of Gibbon, that our certain knowledge does not extend beyond the fact of kindred tribes of Scots, in the declining age of the Roman Empire, inhabiting Caledonia, Ireland (Ierne), and probably the Isle of Man. The history of the migration of nations gives plausibility to the conjecture of the same historian, notwithstanding some obscure traditions to the contrary, that, in a remote period of antiquity, the plains of Ulster were colonised by Scots from Caledonia.—*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. xxv.



ninth centuries, and their schools were resorted to, as the most eminent of that period in Europe, by students from the neighbouring countries. The Northumbrian missionary Willibrord, whose life has been written by Alcuin, the preceptor of Charlemagne, spent ten years in Ireland, in the pursuit of sacred learning; and Johannes Scotus, the friend of Charles the Bald, and the greatest dialectician of his age, was of Irish birth and education. ‘The Hibernians,’ says the learned and impartial Mosheim, ‘distinguished themselves, in these times of ignorance, by the culture of the sciences beyond all other European nations, travelling to the most distant lands, with a view to improve and communicate their knowledge.’<sup>1</sup>

The flourishing condition of the monastic schools of Ireland, and the great ability of the missionaries who issued from them, were co-existent, strange as it may appear, with a general state of barbarism in the country. Even the clergy were in the habit, according to the Irish annalists, of attending their synods with offensive weapons; and their discussions terminated not unfrequently in pitched combats and serious loss of life.<sup>2</sup> The civil records of the country relate a tale, unexampled in the history of any other European nation, of savage feuds and unceasing bloodshed, rarely redeemed by any acts of genuine heroism, or of patriotic, or even manly spirit. The scholastic seminaries lost their reputation long before the time of the English conquest; and the Irish monks, although the pioneers of Christianity in large and important districts of Europe, appear to have had only a very moderate share of success at home.<sup>3</sup> The labours

<sup>1</sup> *Ecclesiastical History*, cent. viii. pt. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Reeves, *Memoir of St. Adamnan*, p. 55.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Cum autem cœpisset pro officio suo agere, tunc intellexit homo Dei, non ad homines se, sed ad bestias destinatum. Nusquam adhuc tales expertus fuerat in quantacunque barbarie: nusquam repererat sic protervos ad



of the celebrated Malachy, after making due allowance for the enthusiasm of his biographer, seem to have been attended with marked success; and his name deserves to be honourably recorded, as that of one who, according to the views of his age and profession, strove earnestly to improve and elevate the poor inhabitants of Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The history of the relations of Ireland to the Catholic Church, in the twelfth century, is highly instructive. Although remarkable for the devotion of its monks, it had not been deemed worthy of the highest ecclesiastical honours; and Malachy, towards the end of his life, undertook a journey to Rome, for the purpose of obtaining from Eugenius, the pall his predecessor had promised.<sup>2</sup> The death of Malachy prevented the accomplishment of his wishes; but soon after,<sup>3</sup> Eugenius sent a legate to Ireland, who summoned a general council, and four archbishops were duly consecrated, and received the greatly prized palls. Within the short interval of three years after this privilege had been conferred upon the Irish Church, Adrian, an Englishman by birth, who now filled the papal chair, issued a bull, authorising Henry II. to enter and possess the land of Ireland, and commanding the nation to accept him as their lawful sovereign. Henry

mores, sic ferales ad ritus, sic ad fidem impios, ad leges barbaros, cervicosos ad disciplinam, spurcos ad vitam: Christiani nomine, re pagani!—Bernard. *Vita Malachi*, c. viii.

<sup>1</sup> *Vita Mal.* c. xviii.

<sup>2</sup> This promise was made by Innocent II. to Malachy himself, on the occasion of a former visit to Rome. The importance attached to the granting of the pall will be understood from the following account of Malachy's interview with Pope Innocent. 'Post hæc petit Malachias confirmari novæ metropolis constitutionem, et utriusque sedis pallia sibi dari. Et confirmationis quidem privilegium mox accepit: "De palliis autem," ait summus pontifex, "oportet solemnius agi. Convocatis episcopis, et clericis, et majoribus terræ, celebrabis generale concilium: et sic conniventia et communi voto universorum per honestas personas requiretis pallium, et dabitur vobis." '—*Vita Mal.* c. xvi.

<sup>3</sup> In 1152. Malachy died in 1148.

is enjoined to root out from among the people their foul sins, and to reform them to some better order of life.<sup>1</sup> This gift was afterwards confirmed by Alexander III. The annals of Europe will be ransacked in vain, to find another case of a Catholic people, long and devotedly attached to the papal seat, and just admitted to the highest privileges of the church, being handed over, by a secret document, to a foreign master, who, reserving the rights of the church, was thenceforth to exercise absolute authority over them, their property, and their religion. Of this transfer of the country, the Irish received no intimation; on the contrary, the document lay secretly in Henry's possession for a period of seventeen years, when his measures for the subjugation of Ireland were matured.<sup>2</sup> After making every allowance for the laxity of political morals in that age, it is scarcely possible to view this transaction otherwise than as a fraudulent conspiracy, between an English king and an English pope, against the independence of a nation, with which they both professed to be at amity. The unhappy people, thus made the sport of fortune, when the time of danger arrived, exhibited, it must be acknowledged, few high or magnanimous qualities, and were easily subdued by a handful of Welsh and English knights.<sup>3</sup> A council of the Irish clergy, held at Cashel, a few months after Henry's arrival, accepted the new order of things, as of God's providence

<sup>1</sup> It would be difficult to find in history a parallel to the audacity of this document. The author of *Cambrensis Eversus*, a Roman Catholic priest of the time of Charles II., after showing at great length the inconsistency of its statements with the previous acts of Eugenius, is driven to the conclusion that the document itself is a forgery (*Camb. Ev.* c. 22). Of its authenticity no doubt is now entertained. The original text will be found in Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, ii. c. v.

■ 'The king upon the receipt hereof was very glad, and let it lye dormant by him, until better opportunity was offered.'—Hanmer's *Chronicle*, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Ulster was an exception to the rest of Ireland, and yielded only after a sharp resistance to the victorious arms of John de Courcy.—Hanmer, p. 296.

and appointment; and decreed, that the Divine service in the Church of Ireland should follow the order and manner of the Church of England, and that Ireland should take from England the rule, how to reform itself, and to improve its habits of life.<sup>1</sup> The identity of practice in the Churches of England and Ireland, established in 1172 by this synod of Cashel, survived the Reformation, and led, in the beginning of the present century, to the fusion of the two Protestant Churches into one.

The pusillanimity exhibited by the Irish people of all ranks and classes, at this momentous crisis, contrasts most unfavourably with the gallant and successful resistance of the Scottish nation, in the following century, to the same English power, now augmented by the annexation of Wales, and wielded by a sovereign of rare ability. The Scottish people still reap substantial advantages from their noble struggle with the first and second Edward; the Irish people suffer, even now, from their ignoble submission to the yoke of a foreigner, who soon learned to despise a race, without bond of union, or national spirit.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The constitutions of this council are given at length by Giraldus, *Expugnatio*, c. 35. The Irish bishops were all taken from the monasteries, and were little fitted, by their early training, to grapple with the difficulties of the new order of things. This may partly account for their tame submission; but the bulls of Adrian and Alexander had doubtless great influence.

<sup>2</sup> Giraldus Cambrensis, *passim*. Many of the statements of the impetuous Welsh bishop, who visited Ireland in attendance upon Prince John, must be received with distrust. He accepts without hesitation the legends of wonder-working lakes, and wells, and islands, which recall in a ruder form the glowing imagery of Eastern tales, and a belief in which, as realities of a bygone age, now passed away, still lingers among the Irish peasantry. Without attempting to discriminate accurately between his account of the Irish, and the prolix counter-statements of the author of *Cambrensis Eversus*, we may, at least, assume that the former conveys the opinion entertained by the invaders of the people, who had yielded so readily to their arms. 'Est autem gens hæc, gens silvestris,' he says, 'gens inhospita; gens ex bestiis solum, et bestialiter vivens. . . Agris igitur passim utuntur pascuiscis, parum floridis, cultis parce, consitis parcissime. . . Item non lino vel lanificio, non aliquo mercimoniorum genere, nec ulla mechanicarum artium

This unhappy transaction has redounded to the advantage of none of the principal actors. The Court of Rome found, in process of time, her bitterest enemy in the nation to which she had so unscrupulously made over the magnificent prize of a kingdom; and the wild dread of popery, long after its power has been practically at an end, threatens, unless checked, to prove a source of serious weakness, if not of actual danger, to the British Empire; by keeping up feelings of fixed distrust, where confidence and harmony should reign, and splitting the nation into two adverse and hostile camps. The condition of the native Irish under the successors of Henry, who ruled by the title of Lords of Ireland, can only be imperfectly gathered from the partial and distorted records of the times; but if unceasing revolts, interminable warfare, and the harshest acts of repression, furnish any measure whereby we may judge of the state of a country, the wild and barbarous people must have sunk very low. The English, finding it impossible to hold the whole country in subjection, confined themselves within a limited district, to which they gave the name of the Pale; and the laws enacted by the Irish Parliament were, even to the time of Elizabeth, enforced only within this narrow circle.<sup>1</sup> But the native Irish were not the only sufferers. The English settlers, or, as they were called, English by blood, to distinguish them from those recently arrived, the English by birth, soon became as turbulent and discontented as the

*specie vitam producant. Solum enim otio dediti, solum desidie dati,' &c.—Topographia Hibernica, iii. c. x.*

<sup>1</sup> Spenser, writing in the reign of Elizabeth, complains of the limits of the Pale having receded since the time of the invasion of Edward Bruce. 'The English Pale then was chiefly in the North, from the point of Donluce, and beyond unto Dublin: having in the midst of her Knockfergus, Belfast, Armagh, and Carlingford, which are now the most outbounds and abandoned places in the English Pale, and indeed not counted of the English Pale at all: for it stretcheth now no further than Dundalke towards the North.'—*View of the State of Ireland*, p. 27.

natives ; and, in the reign of Elizabeth, the Lord Deputy, Sir John Morris, adopted the extreme measure of confiscating their lands and seigniories.<sup>1</sup>

Twenty-six years afterwards, the memorable parliament of Kilkenny was held. Lionel, Duke of Clarence, was then Lord-lieutenant. This parliament enacted a penal statute of extreme severity, and the bishops, who sat in it, formally excommunicated any guilty of violating its provisions. The use of the Brehon law was declared to be treason, as also marrying, or gossiping with the Irish ; the use of an Irish name, or of the Irish apparel or language, was to be punished with loss of lands or imprisonment ; nor was any Irishman to be presented to an ecclesiastical benefice, nor to be received into a monastery or religious house. We are informed by the historians of the period, that this statute did not affect the native Irish, as not being amenable to law, but that it greatly reformed the degenerate English.<sup>2</sup> The improvement must have been of short duration. In the following reign, Richard II. was incessantly demanding money from the English parliament to carry on the war against his subjects in Ireland, and even went over himself at the head of a large army ; but his operations, as is well known, came to a premature end.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This arbitrary enactment gave rise to an irregular assembly, incorrectly described, some time ago, by a leading member of the House of Commons, as the parliament of Kilkenny, which sent to the king a statement of their complaints, in the form of three queries. The last query referred to by the same member was in these words : 'How chanced it, since they are all lords of their own, that the sovereign Lord of them all was never the richer for them ?' The quotation can scarcely be considered a happy one, as the allusion of the Assembly was to the alleged military incapacity and malversations of the English Lord Deputy, and cannot, with any semblance of propriety, be strained into an application to the present times.

<sup>2</sup> Cox, *Hibernia Anglicana*, p. 128. This statute, except the provision regarding the Irish language, was confirmed in 1494 by Poyning's Act.

<sup>3</sup> In a letter to the Duke of York, the King divides the people of Ireland into three classes : Irish savages or enemies, Irish rebels, and English subjects.—*Ibid.* p. 139.

The English settlers soon after began to leave Ireland in large numbers, so that the revenues of the King fell off, and the poverty of the country increased. To remedy this evil, a proclamation was issued, requiring all, who had habitations in Ireland, to repair home; and, in the reign of Henry V., the English parliament made an express enactment, ordering all Irishmen, and particularly Irish clerks and beggars, to be turned out of England and sent back to Ireland. It is clear, from these acts of the government, that the English settlers, now called Irishmen, had already begun systematically to draw the revenues of their lands or offices, while living in England. So early did the dislike to residing in Ireland lead to the practice of what afterwards became familiarly known as absenteeism. The clergy, it appears, did not fail to swell the ranks of the absentees.

A calm review of the history of Ireland, from the Conquest to the Reformation, is far from favourable to the attitude of the church. The unhappy briefs of Adrian and Alexander produced very bitter fruit, and the Irish bishops proved apt pupils in the unjust lessons those briefs inculcated. Throughout the whole of this period, the church appears to have forgotten in Ireland her traditional policy of protecting the weak and depressed, from the excesses of arbitrary power. The evils resulting have been of no ordinary magnitude. The war of classes, which, to this day, renders the name of Irishman a reproach among the nations of Europe, and has tended more than anything else to check the progress of the country, began, as we have seen, long before the Reformation; and, even in those early times, the clergy stand forth, as active participators in the strife, not as peaceful representatives of a divine mission.

The Reformation did not, at first, perceptibly augment the turbulence of the habitually troubled waters of Ire-



land. George Browne, Provincial of the Augustinian Friars in England, was raised, in 1535, to the see of Dublin by Henry VIII. He is usually considered to have been the first Protestant bishop in Ireland, and he was certainly the first ecclesiastic of rank, who espoused the views of Henry on the question of the royal supremacy. It was chiefly through his influence that the Irish parliament passed, in the following year, an act recognising the king as supreme in ecclesiastical, as well as civil matters.<sup>1</sup> Cromer, Archbishop of Armagh, continued firm in his attachment to the old views; and, although the monasteries and other religious houses within the control of the English government were suppressed, the Reformation made little progress in Ireland. In the beginning of the reign of Edward VI., Dowdall, the successor of Cromer in the primacy of Armagh, and his suffragan bishops, with one exception, refused to accept the English liturgy.

It is needless to follow the changes, among the Irish clergy, in the reigns of Edward VI. and of Mary. They had nothing to do with the feelings of the people, and

<sup>1</sup> The laconic speech he delivered on this occasion has been preserved, and is highly characteristic. The arguments are those of an arrogant monk, no longer in the service of the church, but of a master not less exacting. The claims of Henry he justifies, as having been formerly granted by Eleutherius, Bishop of Rome, to St. Lucius, the first Christian king of the Britains. The history of these early worthies in the monkish annals contains nothing to justify this assertion of Archbishop Browne.

‘Lucius accivit rex ad baptismum Britannos  
Primitus et patrios fecit abire Deos.  
Regis Eleutherio festinat epistola Papæ,  
Ut legatos ei dogmata sacra ferat.  
Anno centeno nonagenoque beati  
Partus, templa Dei per sua regna novat.’

The speech of the archbishop, we are informed, produced a great effect upon the clergy, many of whom at first stiffly opposed the bill. The concluding words were doubtless more intelligible and convincing than the arguments. ‘He who will not pass this act as I do is no true subject to his Highness.’ —Cox, p. 249; Ussher, *Brit. Eccles. Antiq.* c. iv.

altogether depended upon the will of the sovereign. Those who attach importance to the unblemished succession of the Irish bishops, ought to rejoice at the brief reunion of the Irish Church with the Church of Rome, during the reign of Mary. Under that sovereign, Archbishop Browne, who had been sent over by Henry VIII., was deprived of his benefice, and Hugh Curwin was duly consecrated according to the strictest canonical forms. Curwin retained his high office under Elizabeth, and consecrated Loftus, Archbishop of Armagh, from whom the Protestant bishops claim succession.<sup>1</sup> The same Catholic sovereign restored to the Archbishop of Armagh, the title of Primate of all Ireland, which had been transferred by Edward VI. to the see of Dublin.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Through this prelate (Loftus Archbishop of Armagh) our Irish Protestant bishops derive their succession without any pretence of blemish or open for cavil. For he was consecrated by Archbishop Curwin, who had been consecrated in England, according to the forms of the Roman pontifical, in the third year of Queen Mary.'—Harris's *Ware*, vol. i. p. 94. The behaviour of the Marian bishops, as they have been called, after the accession of Elizabeth, is involved in considerable obscurity; and in the keen controversy which has lately arisen on this subject, each disputant, as often happens, has assumed, that where historical evidence fails, or is doubtful, the truth, if known, would lie on his side. Two of these bishops, it is admitted, conformed to the Protestant faith, and two at least were deposed by Elizabeth. But twenty-two bishops remain, regarding whom precise information is wanting. Some of them undoubtedly attended the parliament of 1560, and must have taken the oath of supremacy. The historians of the Church have presumed that all who were not deprived, gave a like proof of submission. On the other side, it is contended that the majority of these bishops died in communion with the Church of Rome, on the slender evidence that certain documents, preserved in the Vatican library, which record the appointment of their successors, describe the vacancies as having occurred 'per obitum,' or 'per obitum bonæ memoriæ,' and not 'per deprivationem.' The conjecture of Mr. Froude, that the bishops may have gone through the farce of submission, but may have qualified their submission, and taken the oath of allegiance with a saving clause, cannot be accepted without proof.—Brady's *Irish Reformation*, p. 174 and p. 177.

■ Amidst the chequered opinions of Protestants, the acts referred to in the text will be differently valued. But none, except a few men of extreme views, will fail to recognise the restoration of the national cathedral, one of the few monuments of which the country could boast, as redounding to the credit of the reign of Mary. The cathedral of St. Patrick was suppressed



These religious movements were not accompanied by any improvement in the condition of the country, which continued in the same state of anarchy as before the Reformation. The alternate changes from Catholic to Protestant, again from Protestant to Catholic, and a third time back again to Protestant, on the part of many of the bishops and inferior clergy, resemble the shifting scenes of a stage, and had no influence on the stern realities of the every-day life of the people. A report from the Privy Council, in the seventh year of the reign of Elizabeth, describes in vivid characters the deplorable condition of the country; the Pale overrun with thieves and robbers, the country folk poor, without arms, or horses, or even food; the soldiers in want and living by oppression; Leinster harassed by the Tools and other native chiefs; Kilkenny nearly desolate; Munster almost ruined from the dissensions between the Earls of Desmond and Ormond; Connaught in the like condition; and Ulster, usually the richest province, in open rebellion under Shane O'Neal. Of religion there was little appearance. The churches were unroofed, the clergy dispersed, and the people sunk in barbarism and ignorance. For this deplorable state of things, the only immediate remedy suggested was to fortify the Pale against O'Neal.<sup>1</sup>

The civil history of this period is the record of successive rebellions, headed by powerful native chiefs, usually terminating in their defeat and temporary submission, or death. In 1568, a powerful confederation against the government was formed, and the titular bishops of Cashel and Emly, with a brother of the Earl of Desmond, were sent as envoys, to solicit the aid of the Pope and the King of Spain against Elizabeth. In the

in 1546 by Henry VIII., a formal surrender having been made by the Dean and Chapter. It was restored in 1554 to its ancient dignity by Mary.—Ware, pp. 154, 351.

<sup>1</sup> Cox, *Hib. Ang.* p. 319.

following year, Elizabeth was excommunicated by Pius V., a befitting termination to the drama which opened, four hundred years before, with the bulls of Adrian and Alexander. The war of races was henceforth to be aggravated by religious rancour ; and if the struggle began a little later in Ireland than elsewhere, it was destined to have a longer life, a more unhealthy character, and less favourable results.

The first English monarch of the House of Stuart found Ireland steeped in poverty, the land everywhere waste, large districts depopulated, and famine prevailing in an aggravated form. James had, nevertheless, some advantages over any of his predecessors. His remote ancestors were reputed to be of the same race as the ancient kings of Ireland, and his mother had ever been devotedly attached to the Catholic Church. The great event of his reign, the plantation of Ulster, was in some respects an arbitrary act ; but, with a view to the pacification and improvement of the country, it was entirely justifiable. Few measures, indeed, of modern times have led to more valuable or enduring results, and the whole scheme was not less wisely designed than successfully executed. Considering the temper of the times, the governments both of James I. and Charles I. in Ireland were, on the whole, tolerant. In the parliament of 1613, Catholics as well as Protestants had seats, and were almost equal in number. This parliament confirmed the settlement of Ulster, but not without difficulty ; and it also passed a general act of oblivion and pardon. The laws against non-conformity were severe, but they appear to have been enforced only on rare occasions. The condition of the country began at this time sensibly to improve, and the linen trade was already attracting attention. But the bishops had no share in the wise and clement policy of the government. The mantles

of Adrian and Alexander appear to have descended to them, as a portion of the inheritance they acquired through the archbishop of the Catholic Queen. A proposal having been made by the Lord Deputy to convoke an assembly of the nation, with the design of introducing a more public toleration of religion, a number of the bishops, with Ussher at their head, drew up a protest, in which they did not hesitate to declare, that to give Catholics toleration, or to allow them freely to exercise their religion, is a grievous sin.<sup>1</sup> Nor was this blow

<sup>1</sup> 'The religion of the papists,' this document says, 'is superstitious and idolatrous, their faith and doctrine erroneous and heretical, their church, in respect of both, apostatical. To give them therefore toleration, or to consent that they may freely exercise their religion, and profess their faith and doctrine, is a grievous sin, and that in two respects. For, first, it is to make ourselves accessory to their superstitions, idolatries and heresies, and in a word to all the abominations of popery; but also (which is a consequent of the former) to the perdition of the seduced people, which perish in the deluge of the Catholic apostasy. Secondly, to grant them a toleration, in respect of any money to be given, or contribution to be made by them, is to set religion to sale, and with it the souls of the people, whom Christ our Saviour hath redeemed with his most precious blood.'—Cox, *Hib. Ang.*, part ii. p. 43. According to the strange argument of these divines, to relax in the smallest measure the levying of tithes, or any other of the manifold dues of the church, from the Catholic population, was to be guilty of simony, and to bring into peril the souls of the poor people in the world to come. A church, carrying measures with so high a hand, might at least be expected to bear a character free from reproach, and to be honest in its dealings with others. The reader will be surprised to hear that the reverse of this statement is true. From *Bedell's Life*, we learn that the Protestant Church in Ireland was, at this time, so corrupt that the charge of scandalous simony might fairly be preferred against it. 'Things sacred were so commonly exposed to sale that the practice had become proverbial, and even the court which sat in the name, and by the authority, of Archbishop Ussher, was notorious for the most scandalous abuses. 'Bribes,' says Bishop Burnett, 'went about almost barefaced, and the exchange they made of penance for money was the worst sort of simony. . . . The officers of the court (Archbishop Ussher's) made it their business to draw people into trouble by vexatious suits, and to hold them so long in it, that for three pence of the tythe of turf they would be put to five pounds charge. . . . They thought they had a sort of right to oppress the natives, and that all was well got that was wrung from them.'—*Edell's Life*, p. 69. Nor were the abuses confined to the church courts. The revenues of the episcopal sees and parsonages, it appears from the same authority, were habitually sold and alienated by those in possession, while the parish churches were generally

struck in vain. The English House of Commons presented, soon after, a remonstrance to the King against the public profession of the Popish religion in Ireland, and the government was forced to yield.

Two years later, Bedell, who had been Provost of Trinity College, was appointed Bishop of Kilmore. His remarkable career calls for special notice, even in this brief narrative. Of retiring habits, but with a cultivated mind, and the firmest integrity of purpose, he applied himself, with surprising energy, to correct the gross abuses of the Protestant Church, and also to educate and improve the poor Roman Catholics by whom he was surrounded. At great personal sacrifice, he had the Old Testament translated into the Irish language; and his labours were unremitting to raise the Irish people, of all creeds, from the low depths into which they had sunk. The reward he received from the Protestant Church came in the form of two prosecutions, in both of which he was condemned, and in the hostility of all his episcopal brethren, who, one by one, deserted this high-minded man, till even his stern spirit almost gave way under the unmerited reproaches of Ussher. The native Irish, although alive to his zeal for the Protestant cause, fully appreciated his personal worth and noble efforts on their behalf; and, when he died amidst the sad scenes which followed the events of 1641, they buried him with military honours, and chaunted over his grave, ‘*Requiescat in pace ultimus Anglorum*’: signifying thereby, that as he had been the

in a state of ruin. If any one doubts the fidelity of this picture, let him read the following description of the Protestant Church of Ireland, by Archbishop Ussher himself, in a letter he addressed, about this time, to the Archbishop of Canterbury. ‘As for the general state of things here, they are so desperate that I am afraid to write anything thereof. Some of the adverse part have asked me the question where I have heard or read before, that religion and men’s souls should be set to sale after this manner. Unto whom I could reply nothing, but that I had read in Mantuan that there was another place in the world where ‘*Cœlum est venale Deusque*’—‘both Heaven and God himself are set to sale.’—*Ibid.*, p. 70.

best, so was he also to be the last, of the English in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The outbreak of 1641 was one of those terrible efforts of an inferior race to shake off the yoke of a powerful nation, from whose rule they dreaded the confiscation of their property, and the destruction of their religion. The greater part of Ulster had been taken from the natives, and, as we have seen, repeopled, or planted, with Scottish Presbyterians. This measure, so happy in its ultimate consequences, produced at first a feeling of great insecurity in the other provinces; and the native Catholics throughout Ireland began seriously to fear that the policy of the English government was gradually to exterminate them, or drive them from the country. The confiscation of six counties in Ulster had already filled them with dismay, and a rumour prevailed before 1641, whether on just grounds or not is unknown, that seven other counties were about to be seized by the King.

The intolerance of the Protestant bishops, and the rapacity of the church courts, added to the general dread on the score of religion.<sup>2</sup> The motives, or at least the

<sup>1</sup> *Bedell's Life*, p. 169. The printing of the translation of the Old Testament during Bedell's lifetime was prevented through the jealousy of some of the clergy of his own church; but happily the manuscript was not destroyed in 1641, and a few years later it was printed, chiefly at the charge of the celebrated Boyle.—*Ibid.*, p. 94 and p. 106. Bedell's Irish Bible was used by the Scottish clergy in the Highlands before the scriptures were translated into Gaelic.—Macleod's *Reminiscences of a Highland Parish*, p. 113.

<sup>2</sup> The intolerance of any difference of opinion on religious dogmas, for which the founders of the Church of England, as well as the other early Churches of the Reformation, were conspicuous, has often been the subject of remark, and is difficult to explain, without attributing to them lower motives than those from which they claimed to act. The example of the Church of Rome, far from palliating their conduct, renders even more manifest its inconsistency with the principles on which the Reformation rested. The Catholic Church, claiming both direct inspiration and miraculous gifts, and acknowledged for centuries, throughout the west of Europe, to be the sole depository of Divine truth, might defend itself on the assumption, that

apprehensions, which history shows have always led, among weak and fanatical populations, to the cruellest revolts, existed at this time in Ireland, and ended, as usual, in great and lamentable excesses.

Under the Protectorate, the Catholic population of Ireland was treated with extreme severity. Males, above fourteen years of age, were declared to be the property of the State, and to be at the entire disposal of the government; large numbers of young boys and girls were sold to traders, and forcibly transported to Virginia, Jamaica, and other colonies; Catholics were prohibited, under penalty of death, from residing in any garrison, port, or town; to harbour or protect a Catholic priest was punishable with death; all right of trading was taken away from the native Irish; and the few Irish families of condition that remained, were forced to abandon their homes and settle in the desolate province of Connaught. Some of these measures may perhaps be defended, as needful precautions against the recurrence of the events of 1641; but, on the whole, the unfortunate natives appear to have been treated with great harshness, and no effort was made to soothe the wounds of the country by

it was its duty to suppress by force, what it deemed to be a wilful rebellion against Divine authority, and a course of conduct fatal to the souls of men. The unhappy results of the line of action it pursued should teach mankind to restrain the priestly office to its proper place in human society, and not to give it despotic sway over either the minds or the bodies of men. But the intolerance of the English and Irish bishops admits of no excuse or apology, from whatever side we view it. They pretended to derive their authority through a church denounced by themselves as apostate; their doctrines and principles they declared to be agreeable to the Word of God; but as they claimed neither miraculous gifts, nor direct inspiration, those doctrines and principles could only be binding on others, if, after due inquiry, they were convinced of their truth. Yet, in plain violation of the right of private judgment, the keystone of the Reformation and of every justifiable revolt against authority, either political or ecclesiastical, these bishops required all their fellow subjects to submit to their opinions, and conform to the new worship; and some of them were active agents in enforcing the penalties of the law against any who dared to dissent.



gentle treatment, much less to extend the great principle of religious toleration to the Catholics of Ireland.

The struggle for power among the contending parties in the State, and likewise, the increasing intelligence of men in power, gave rise, in 1686, to a Declaration for liberty of conscience from an unexpected quarter. This act of toleration, proceeding from a Catholic sovereign, was, it appears, faithfully carried into execution, and gave relief to the Presbyterians of Ulster.<sup>1</sup> But events were now rapidly hurrying onward, and Protestant England had not yet learned the lesson of toleration; nor, if she had, would she probably have cared for a gift, coming in an unconstitutional form, from a source usually hostile to freedom.

The penal laws, enacted in the reigns of William III. and Anne, form one of the most painful passages in the history of these countries, particularly when we consider the general enlightenment of Great Britain at this time, and the character of the sovereigns and statesmen at the head of affairs. These laws, 'which have scarce a parallel in European history, unless it be that of the Protestants in France, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes,' were directed against the Roman Catholics of Ireland, who were still formidable from their numbers and sufferings. 'To have exterminated the Catholics by the sword, or expelled them, like the Moriscocs of Spain, would have been little more repugnant to justice and humanity, but incomparably more politic.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'It extended to Ireland and afforded a seasonable relief to the Presbyterians from persecution. . . . Ministers now re-entered their places of worship, which had remained forcibly closed during the last five years.'—Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, vol. ii. p. 332.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, *Constitutional History of England*, chap. xviii. 'No papist was allowed to keep a school, or to teach any in private houses, except the children of the family. Severe penalties were denounced against such as should go themselves, or send others, for education beyond seas, in the Romish religion; and, on probable information given to a magistrate, the

In the reign of George II. a petition to the Crown, from Primate Boulter and others, exhibits the views held at that time, by the leading Protestants of Ireland, regarding the proper method of dealing with the Catholics. It sets forth in vivid terms the condition of the Popish natives, as having little sense of religion, except what they gained from their clergy, who kept them in gross ignorance and in great disaffection to the government. With the approval of the Bishop of London, a scheme was contrived, and sanctioned, for gradually converting the Catholics to the Protestant faith; and the Charter schools were founded, in which the orphan and neglected children of Popish and poor natives were to be educated in Protestant principles. It is painful to contemplate how the Church, even in her most modest efforts, seems always to have lagged behind the intelligence of the age, and how, blinded by her dislike to Popery and zeal for Protestantism, she sadly forgot the respect due to the sacred ties of domestic life. The scheme, it is hardly needful to add, was badly worked and proved wholly abortive.<sup>1</sup>

burden of proving the contrary was thrown on the accused; the offence not to be tried by a jury, but by justices at quarter sessions (7 Will. III., c. 4). Intermarriages between persons of different religions, and possessing any estate in Ireland, were forbidden; the children in case of either parent being Protestant, might be taken from the other, to be educated in that faith. No papist could be guardian to any child; but the Court of Chancery might appoint some relation, or other person, to bring up the ward in the Protestant religion. The eldest son, being a Protestant, might turn his father's estate in fee simple into a tenancy for life, and thus secure his own inheritance. But if the children were all papists, the father's lands were to be of the nature of gavelkind, and descend equally among them. Papists were disabled from purchasing lands, except for terms of not more than thirty-one years, at a rent not less than two-thirds of the full value. They were to conform within six months after any title should accrue by descent, devise, or settlement, on pain of forfeiture to the next Protestant heir' (9 Will. III., c. 3; 2 Anne, c. 6).—*Const. Hist.*, chap. xviii.

<sup>1</sup> 'The result of this new crusade was very lamentable, and the history of the Charter schools is one of the most painful episodes in the later annals of Ireland. Although the operations of the society were on so small a scale that, after fifty years, it could not muster 2,000 children in all its schools, yet these were so sadly neglected, that, in the language of Howard, who



The Church of Ireland was not at first identical in all respects with the Church of England. The articles agreed upon by the convocation of London in 1562, and ratified in 1571, were not accepted by the convocation of the Irish Church till 1634. In the same year, a book of constitutions and canons was compiled, and afterwards approved by the king. It contained some of the English canons, with the addition of others not to be found among them.<sup>1</sup> When the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland was established, the churches of the two countries were also united. The earlier union between England and Scotland afforded no precedent for this course, and its policy is open to grave doubt. It linked the fortunes of the powerful Church of England with those of a weak sister, to whom perhaps, as an independent church, she might have given aid in the hour of difficulty, but who, as a portion of herself, is now only a source of embarrassment and danger.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland is coeval with the plantation of Ulster by James I. The country being almost depopulated, Scotch settlers in large numbers willingly embraced the advantages offered by the government; and the unwise effort about the same time to force episcopacy upon Scotland, compelled some of the more rigid ministers to leave that country, and seek refuge in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> The Scottish ministers who first arrived met

visited them in 1784, they were such sickly, pale, and miserable objects, as to be a disgrace to society. A public inquiry was soon after instituted, and some of the grosser abuses were corrected; but the system was essentially faulty, the children were rarely successful in life, and about thirty years ago the schools were finally closed.'—Address on Education by the Author, *Transactions of the Social Science Association for 1867*, p. 93.

<sup>1</sup> Some diversity was retained for the express purpose of securing the liberty of the Church of Ireland.—Ware, vol. i. p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> It is remarkable that the early settlers came chiefly from the worst portions of the Scotch population. 'For the most part they were such as either poverty, scandalous lives, or, at the best, adventurous seeking of better accommodation had forced thither. . . . and the preachers were generally

with a cordial reception from Bishop Echlin, and some of them were even presented to benefices without episcopal ordination. Unfortunately, this state of good feeling continued only for a short time; and four of the leading Scotch clergymen were, a few years later, formally deposed by Bishop Echlin himself; while other ministers of the diocese, who held Presbyterian views, considered it more prudent to conform. The history of the Presbyterian Church in Ulster is henceforth that of a long struggle against the hostility of the Protestant bishops, aided usually by the State. Finding other means had failed, a form of oath, long remembered by the name of the Black Oath, was issued by the Privy Council, and imposed upon all the Scottish residents in Ulster. With such rigour was this oath enforced, that many of the best settlers abandoned their homes and fled into Scotland, while others were imprisoned or fined to a ruinous amount.<sup>1</sup> Bramhall, then Bishop of Derry, and afterwards Archbishop of Armagh, was conspicuous for his hostility to all who declined to conform, and most unscrupulous in his efforts to crush the Scottish recusants. The young settlement, on which the hopes of Ireland were thenceforth to depend, was almost destroyed by the violence and intolerance of Bishop Bramhall and some of his colleagues. The Presbyterians, on the other hand, had only so far learned the lesson of toleration as to apply it in their own favour, when the weaker party. They rivalled, if they could not surpass, the bishops in hostility

of the same complexion as the people.'—Blair's *Life* quoted in Reid's *History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, vol. i. p. 93. See also Adair's *Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, and Stewart's *History*.

<sup>1</sup> The oath was skilfully drawn up so as to wound the Presbyterian in his tenderest part. Those who took it 'bound themselves to obey all the king's royal commands, i.e., whatever the king from his royal breast should command them, without reservation and subordination to the Word of God.'—Adair's *Narrative*, p. 64.

to the native Irish and English settlers, who adhered to the ancient faith ; and, had their positions been reversed, it may be doubted whether they would have granted to Bishop Bramhall a larger measure of justice than he was disposed to mete to them.

The execution of Charles I. gave great offence to the Presbyterians of Ulster, and they drew up, and ordered to be read in their churches, a spirited declaration against the violence of the Independents, and the trial and execution of the king. But they had other grounds of complaint to which they appear to have attached even more importance. They accused the sectarian party in England, as they named those then in power, of destroying the covenant and of calling it a snare, although acknowledged to be a support both to religion and liberty. They likewise blamed the same party for endeavouring to establish by law an universal toleration, a measure they describe as fatal to religion, and repugnant to the Word of God and the two first articles of the covenant.<sup>1</sup> The struggle proceeded so far that several of the clergy, having refused to sign an engagement, acknowledging the government of the Commons, were obliged to take refuge in flight ; and a large scheme was matured for removing the leading Presbyterians from the proximity of their friends in Scotland, and planting them in Tipperary. But all these coercive measures were abandoned, when Cromwell assumed the reins of power, and the Presbyterians were permitted, during the Protectorate, to use their religious observances freely in public. Under Charles II., the Presbyterians in Ireland were, on the whole, treated with favour. A pension conferred in this reign on the Presbyterian ministers, although not regularly paid, may be regarded as the origin of the *Regium Donum*. Under

<sup>1</sup> Reid, vol. ii. p. 85. This document drew forth an official reply, remarkable for the bitterness of its language, from the pen of Milton.

James II. the Presbyterians, as we have seen, were treated with consideration and obtained full freedom of worship.

After the revolution of 1688, the question of toleration again arose. The bishops, alarmed at the growth of Presbyterianism, used all their influence to oppose the free toleration of nonconformity in Ireland. A war of pamphlets ensued, in which the broadest principles of toleration were set forth on both sides ; but little inclination was shown to give practical effect to these principles ; on the part of the Church, in the case of the Presbyterian ; on the part both of the Church and the Presbyterians, in the case of the Roman Catholic. The oath of supremacy was, however, abolished ; and a royal bounty of twelve hundred pounds annually secured to the Presbyterian ministers.<sup>1</sup> During the reign of Anne, the church party was in the ascendant. The penal laws enacted against the Catholics were warmly supported by the Presbyterians, when, to their surprise and dismay, they found that they themselves were not allowed to escape. The sacramental test formed a clause of one of these statutes, and being made retrospective, the Presbyterians found themselves suddenly excluded from the army, militia, and civil departments of the State. Nor was this accompanied by an act of toleration such as existed in England, so that they were placed in a worse position than the Dissenters there.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In 1690. It was at first made a special charge on the customs of the port of Belfast.—Reid, vol. ii. p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Although these most unjust and oppressive laws,’ observes the impartial historian of the Presbyterian church, ‘were passed for the sake of the Established Church, yet the Presbyterians were so blinded by the headstrong and unreasoning anti-papal spirit of those days, as to concur but too cordially in their enactment. And it was a singular occurrence, an instance perhaps of righteous requital, that they themselves, after having given their aid in parliament to carry one of the most cruel of these statutes against the Romanists, should, by a clause added to that very statute, be deprived

The sacramental test was not repealed till the year 1780, when the volunteers of Ulster, who were chiefly Presbyterians, had become a powerful body, and were the only defence of that part of Ireland. The validity of Presbyterian marriages was soon after recognised; and, after the legislative union, a large addition was made to the *Regium Donum*.<sup>1</sup> The most important event in the recent history of this church was the union, in 1840, of the synod of Ulster with the Seceders, another large body of Presbyterians. The supreme court of the united church was designated the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. It professes to follow the discipline, and to hold the standards, of the parent Church of Scotland; but, since the great rent of 1843 in the latter, it has taken the side of the Free Church, and maintained friendly relations with it.

In the early part of the last century, a secession from the synod of Ulster occurred on the part of certain ministers, who declined to subscribe the Westminster confession of faith; and the seceding body maintained for upwards of a century a separate existence, under the name of the Presbytery of Antrim. They received a large accession from the synod of Ulster shortly before the union of 1840, when subscription to the standards of the Church of Scotland was rigidly enforced. The seceding ministers held anti-trinitarian views, but their congregations have always been classed among the Pres-

of their own civil rights and subjected in their turn to serious grievances on account of their religion.

*Nec lex est æquior ulla  
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.'*

—Reid, vol. iii. p. 19.

<sup>1</sup> The augmentation to the synod of Ulster and presbytery of Antrim was nearly 9,000*l.*, or more than the whole amount they had received before. The ministers, according to the importance of their congregations, received an allowance varying from 100*l.* to 50*l.* annually. This arrangement has since been altered to a uniform payment of 75*l.* to each minister.

byterian congregations of Ireland, and they receive support from the State.<sup>1</sup>

From the Irish branch, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America has sprung. Early in the eighteenth century, the presbytery of Philadelphia was founded; and its first moderator was Francis Makemie, a native of Donegal, in Ireland.<sup>2</sup> The second Presbyterian minister in the same country has been claimed for Scotland, but it appears, from indisputable evidence, that he also was of Irish birth, and from the same county of Donegal.<sup>3</sup> The ethnical enquirer will perhaps be interested in tracing the conditions, whether physical or generic, which connect so remarkably this remote part of Ireland with great religious movements. The founder, in the sixth century, of the first Christian church in the north-west of Scotland, and the founders, in the eighteenth century, of the Presbyterian Church on the continent of America, were all natives of this wild, and even now, scarcely civilised district, remarkable in other respects only for the poverty and helplessness of the inhabitants.

The Methodist Church in Ireland is rapidly rising into importance, and its history forms one of the most singular episodes in the annals of the country. The cruel wars of Louis XIV. having forced many of the Protestant

<sup>1</sup> The Unitarian bodies in Ireland are the following: the presbytery or synod of Munster (1660), the presbytery of Antrim (1727), the remonstrant synod of Ulster (1830), and the northern presbytery of Antrim (1862).

<sup>2</sup> 'What gives Makemie his grand distinction is that he was undoubtedly the first regular and thorough Presbyterian minister in this country; and he may justly be regarded as the father of the Presbyterian Church. His influence in the region, in which he chiefly exercised his ministry, was extensive and powerful.'—Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. iii. p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> 'The question in relation to the place of Mackie's nativity has been agitated with no little interest; some contending from the name that he was from Scotland, and others strenuously urging that he was a native of Ireland. The will throws all the light on this subject that we need. He was the son of "Mr. Patrick Mackie, sometime of St. Johnstone, in the county of Donegal, of the kingdom of Ireland."'—*Ibid.*, p. 9.



inhabitants of the Palatinate into exile, a large settlement, composed, it is said, of five hundred families, was formed in Ireland, chiefly in the county of Limerick. They received allotments of land from the government; and to encourage them to remain in the country, they were exempted from the payment of rent for a period of twenty years. They long preserved the use of their native language, and were distinguished from the other inhabitants by their superior husbandry, industrious habits, and peculiar customs. The principles of Wesley were readily embraced by these people; and that remarkable man always manifested a deep interest in their welfare. During the course of his life, he visited Ireland no less than twenty-one times, and never neglected the German settlement.<sup>1</sup> In 1760, Philip Embury, the first local preacher on the American continent, and Barbara Heck, described in the glowing language of Methodism, as a 'mother in Israel,' emigrated from Ireland to America; and, with other Irish palatines, founded the first Methodist chapel at New York, the cradle, as it has been designated, of American Methodism.<sup>2</sup>

The history of the other religious communities in Ireland may be briefly stated. About the middle of the last century, the Covenanters, or Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland, sent two missionaries to the north of Ireland, who established there a branch of that church. The members of this communion have been remarkable for the consistency and singleness of purpose, with which they have maintained, and acted upon, their somewhat extreme opinions. Their form of church government is Presbyterian, but they have always declined to receive

<sup>1</sup> His last visit was in 1789, when he was eighty-six years old.

<sup>2</sup> Crook's *Ireland and the Centenary of American Methodism*, chap. v. The same writer claims for Ireland Robert Williams, a conspicuous name among the early Methodist preachers in America, but the place of his birth appears not to be clearly known.

pecuniary aid in any way from the State. Two small churches, the United Presbyterian and the Secession, complete the enumeration of the various forms of Presbyterianism in Ireland.

The Independent and Baptist Churches are also represented in Ireland; but, relatively to the Presbyterian and Methodist, the number and influence of their members is inconsiderable.

The Society of Friends deserve a larger notice than my limits allow. They have preserved, perhaps more than any other religious body in Ireland, a similarity in character and feeling to their co-religionists in England, and have reproduced on Irish soil their orderly and industrious habits. It was to the members of this Society that the distribution of the munificent sum, raised by private benevolence in England, for the relief of the sufferers from the Irish famine, was entrusted; and it is well known how faithfully they executed the trust.

The great development of the linen trade in the north of Ireland has recently attracted to Belfast a large number of German traders, chiefly from Bremen and Hamburg. Many of them are Jews, who already form a distinctive feature in the busy population of that rising town.

To estimate correctly the relative importance of the religious communities in any country, it is necessary to take many things into consideration which the common statistical returns fail to show. The wealth, the intelligence, the distribution of the members of a religious body, are not less important elements in this question than their numerical strength. A full and accurate analysis is here clearly impossible, but a sufficient approximation for our purpose may be made. It is the more needful to know with some precision how this matter stands, as popular orators and party writers have often confused it, in the public mind, by the use of loose and



inaccurate language. The people of Ireland is an expression frequently employed to describe the Roman Catholics alone, and Ireland is often spoken of as a Catholic country. In number, the Catholics greatly exceed all the other inhabitants, but their preponderance is only numerical; and to ignore the powerful Protestant minority, which forms the great majority among the classes of higher intelligence, and has succeeded in planting on Irish soil the flourishing industry of Ulster, is altogether inexcusable. No greater mistake can be made than to consider Ireland to be a Catholic country, in the same sense in which France is a Catholic, or England a Protestant country. The boast of the Orangemen of the North, that they are the sole strength of the country, and that, if left to themselves, they would have little difficulty in bringing the island into subjection, and in putting down the feeble men-apes of the south, is idle and exaggerated language on the other side, and equally calculated to mislead.

The Roman Catholics form a little more than three-fourths of the whole population of Ireland. Even in Ulster they are rather more than one-half of the population; but in the important counties of Down and Antrim they are greatly outnumbered by the Protestants. In the southern and western provinces, the Protestants do not amount to more than one in sixteen of the inhabitants. Except among the town populations on the east coast, and in the Protestant districts of Ulster, the whole of the poorer population of Ireland belongs to the Catholic Church, while the wealth of the country is chiefly in the hands of the Protestants. The Catholic clergy of Ireland number about 2,500, or nearly one priest to every 350 families. With the exception of a few members of some of the religious orders, they may all be said to come from the humbler ranks of society, and

they are chiefly educated at the College of Maynooth. Their training is of that exclusive kind, which was adopted in France, after the revolution of 1789, and is certainly less favourable to the higher development of character than the older and freer system, which prevailed in the days of Bossuet and Fenelon. Among the Catholic clergy of Ireland are to be found a few men of literary taste and refinement; but a large number are unhappily of a coarser type, and better fitted to guard their flocks, when assailed by the wolf, than to tend them gently in quiet pastures.

The Episcopal Protestant, or Anglo-Irish Church, claims one-eighth of the inhabitants of Ireland, or one-half of the whole Protestant population. Chiefly resident in the towns, its members form nowhere an important element of the rural population; and there is no county in Ireland in which they are not numerically inferior to the rest of the inhabitants. The old policy of expelling the Roman Catholics from the towns, and raising up a wall of separation between them and the Protestants, has failed to keep the town population unmixed, but has shut the Anglican population out from the country. To this church belong almost exclusively the proprietors of the soil, and a portion of the poor of the larger towns. In Leinster and Munster, the industrial middle class, a very small section of the community, is composed chiefly of Catholics and Anglican Protestants. In Ulster, where alone a commercial and manufacturing population exists to any amount, the newer gentry belong for the most part to the Anglican or Established church. But their fathers, who laid the foundation of the family wealth, were with scarcely any exception Presbyterians or Nonconformists; and, amidst the heat and excitement of religious feeling in Ireland, it is refreshing to find a great change of this kind, unaccompanied by any display of rancour, or even dis-

pleasure. So little, however, of the impassioned zeal of the convert has been exhibited by those who have changed their religion, that it is doubtful whether we are justified in ascribing this movement altogether to feelings of piety. The national Saint, although he gave up his nobility for the public advantage, could not make the Irish people forget that he had been a Roman patrician, and the desire to rival his gentle birth has ever been an amiable weakness of all classes of the nation.

Of the clergy of the Irish branch of the Anglican Church it is difficult to draw a faithful portrait. The University of Dublin has always maintained a high reputation, and has supplied the Church in Ireland with a fairly educated clergy. Some of them are indeed able and accomplished men, and have taken a high position in the world of literature and science. But I am wholly at a loss to discover the grounds of the alleged superiority of the clergy of the present day over those who have gone before them. They may perhaps be more earnest pastors, but they are more narrow-minded men; they have retained all the prejudices of their predecessors, but they have lost the vigour of character and social qualities, which tempered and subdued those prejudices. The feeble tirades, which form the common staple of their platform orations, are doubtless most painful to the superior men of their order; but, it is to be feared, they reflect too faithfully the general sentiments of the class. If they no longer claim to exercise authority over the whole nation, they have fallen into an opposite error, and now act as if they were the spiritual guides of a petty sect, and had little interest in the general community in which they live. A feeble attempt to proselytize Roman Catholic children can scarcely form an exception to this remark, even if the means employed were always legitimate.

The Presbyterians of Ulster, as we have seen, are chiefly of Scottish origin. The conjecture of the historian that, in some remote period of antiquity, the fertile plains of Ulster received a colony of hungry Scots, became an unquestionable event in the seventeenth century. The descendants of the Presbyterian colony, with some later additions from England and Scotland, now constitute one-eighth of the population of Ireland. They are chiefly collected in the eastern half of the province of Ulster, and they have given to the inhabitants of that district their distinctive character. They are the principal occupiers of the soil in this part of Ulster, which ought rather to be regarded as an outlying province of Scotland than as a portion of Ireland. The early settlers, as we have seen, came from an inferior class of the population of Scotland, and their descendants have accordingly exhibited few of the higher qualities of that nation ; but they have carried to Irish soil its industrious habits and commercial enterprise. The Presbyterian clergy reflect the character of the people to whom they minister. They have not been remarkable for profound learning, or brilliant parts ; but they have been useful members of society, and have shown great shrewdness in adapting the requirements of Presbyterianism to the difficulties of its position in Ireland.<sup>1</sup>

The Methodist Church is scattered over different parts of Ireland, and is steadily gaining ground. The ministers of this church in Ireland maintain intimate relations with their brethren in England, and closely resemble them. There are above 200 Methodist ministers in Ireland, a number nearly equal to one-third of that of the ministers of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

<sup>1</sup> The settlement of 1840, which gave its present form to the national system of education, was carried only after a long struggle by the synod of Ulster, and was the work of one or two leading members of that body. The success of the national system in Ireland has been mainly due to the modifications then introduced into the original scheme.

The connection between the industries of Ireland and the religious communities may be described in a few brief sentences. The linen manufacture is the only one in Ireland of national importance. The cotton manufacture has established itself in a few isolated spots ; but the cotton factories gave employment, in 1862, only to 2,700 persons, and since that time this number has probably diminished. The woollen manufacture, once very flourishing, has so dwindled into insignificance, that in the same year, the woollen factories of Ireland did not employ 400 operatives. The poplin, or tabinet weaving of Dublin, represents the silk manufactures of Ireland ; and the paper trade has 21 mills in operation. An important employment for females, the embroidery of muslin, sprang up a few years ago, chiefly in Ulster ; but the change of fashion has of late greatly contracted this branch of industry.

It is to the linen trade that the eastern side of Ulster owes its comparatively thriving condition. It is a very old industry in that part of Ireland ; the mildness of the winters and moisture of the climate preserving the fields in perpetual verdure, and adapting them admirably to the purposes of the bleacher. It was greatly improved by the skill of some French emigrants, who took refuge there after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The failure of the cotton supply, during the civil war in America, gave this manufacture an extraordinary impulse ; and the annual value of the linen cloth and yarns, now exported from Ulster, is estimated at a sum exceeding 10,000,000*l.* sterling. The traveller through Ulster is surprised at the unusual spectacle, in the British isles, of fields waving with the graceful flax plant ; but he will often be grieved to remark with how little care this important culture is conducted. The admirable flax fields of Belgium, where industry and skill have given a

double value to the produce of the land, will recur to him; and he may perhaps be tempted to retort the language of the Orange Ulsterman, and ask whether the inferiority in this, as in many other things, of Protestant Ulster to Catholic Belgium, is due to the difference of religion in the two countries.

The linen trade of Ireland, with the exception of five or six factories in Kildare, Louth, and Dublin, is confined to the province of Ulster, and, in that province, chiefly to the Presbyterian districts. The Anglican Church is, however, fairly represented among the manufacturers and employers of labour, principally, as has already been stated, in consequence of its having been largely recruited from Presbyterian families, when they had acquired wealth, and became anxious for social position. It would be ungenerous not to acknowledge that the Established Church has done good service, by affording to the wealthier classes, a more refined and less severe form of worship, than that formerly used in the Presbyterian 'meeting-houses' of Ulster. But it has done little in other respects to promote the industry of Ireland. An institution, having many excellent qualities in itself, has been utterly marred, by the false position in which it has been placed, and by the unwise and unjustifiable efforts it has made to crush the other religions of the country. To suppress Presbyterianism in Ulster was even a more darling object of its ambition, than to get rid of Catholicism throughout Ireland; and it almost succeeded, at one time, in driving the Scottish settlers from the district. Its attitude to the Catholics has been as unconciliatory as that of the sternest Nonconformist; while, unlike the Nonconformist, it has done little useful work in its own sphere. Nor has its conduct, in recent times, been guided by wiser counsels than those which led Archbishop Bramhall, in the seventeenth century, to persecute the Presbyterians, or Arch-



bishop Boulter, in the succeeding century, to found the Charter schools. The great measure of national education, one of the principal achievements of Lord Derby's political life, has always been bitterly opposed by the Established Church. Its influence has been sufficient to deprive large numbers of the Protestant children of the advantages of the national school; but it has not been sufficient to provide them with competent teachers and proper appliances in schools of its own. A serious injury has thus been inflicted on an important section of the Irish population; and the most lamentable consequences would have ensued, if the Presbyterian ministers had not acted with more discretion, and refused to follow in the train of their episcopal brethren. Of late, too, the laity have in many cases interfered, wisely deeming the education of the people to be of paramount importance to the liturgical scruples of the clergy. The amount of injury already inflicted on the rising generation of Anglican Protestants is far from inconsiderable, and the influence of the clergy has been seriously weakened.<sup>1</sup>

The Church in Ireland has, for many years, occupied the ambiguous position of an establishment tolerated, on account of its wealth, its respectable age, its connection with the Church of England, and the social position of its members. The opinion at one time held, even by high authorities, that it is an advanced outwork of the Protes-

<sup>1</sup> The writer is far from objecting to the establishment of schools, scriptural or other, unconnected with the State, for the education of the poor. On the contrary, he is of opinion that any stereotyped system of education, however well contrived, is unfavourable to the development of the higher qualities of a free people; and he therefore considers individuals or societies, who support good schools independent of the State, to be public benefactors. But it is a very different thing recklessly to interfere, as the Church in Ireland has done, with the education and material well-being of a large portion of the community; and to make the pulpits and platforms resound with violent denunciations, against the antisciptural character of the state education, even after the contrary has been proved by the example of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches.



tant faith, has long been abandoned by all thoughtful men; and no living statesman of any position would venture to declare that, if the ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland were to be recast, such an establishment would now be proposed. The forcible retention, by one-eighth of the population, of the portion of the fruits of the land, originally set apart for the spiritual benefit of the whole, is a clear and indisputable proof, that the social and political state of the country has been essentially unsound, and that the bulk of the people have been kept in a state of extreme subjection. But, however great may have been the injustice involved in the ecclesiastical arrangements of Ireland, few men, even among those who felt the evil most acutely, were prepared to encounter the risk of disturbing them. To overturn a great national institution is always an operation of danger, and should never be attempted, except on the strongest grounds of necessity. A singular combination of events, which it would be foreign to my purpose to describe, has placed the Irish Church on her trial; but, in whatever way the present struggle among parties shall end, it may safely be predicted, without laying claim to any large share of political sagacity, that the State Church in Ireland, like the old hill-roads of the country, is already condemned, and must be prepared to see at no distant day the public property, hitherto exclusively devoted to her use, diverted, partially or wholly, into other channels.

The passions and prejudices of mankind are, unfortunately, nowhere more freely appealed to, than in the fierce struggles for ascendancy, which so often occur in constitutional states; and the habit of evading questions of difficulty, when a party is in power, and of pressing the same questions as of extreme urgency, when the party is in opposition, has grown into an evil of great magnitude, and threatens to strain to the utmost, even the British

constitution. The defenders of the Irish Church may justly complain that the artifices of party have never been more freely used than on this occasion. The Church of England has been assured, that living in the affections of the English people, and commanding a majority of the inhabitants, she has nothing to fear from the removal of such an excrescence as the Irish Church. No one can value more highly than the writer, the services rendered by the Church in England, to the highest purposes of humanity ; nor is any one less anxious to disturb so grand and noble an edifice. But the course of events is inexorable, and the equality of all men in the eye of the law, irrespective of religious belief, is manifestly incompatible with the existence of a privileged caste. A few years will probably see the Church in a minority in England, as the United Church is already in England and Ireland ; but, whether the popular balance inclines a little to one side or the other, is surely not to decide the momentous question of the maintenance of a State church. It may be convenient, for the objects of party, to assume that the Dissenters and Roman Catholics of England are pleased to carry a double burden, in order that others may march without encumbrance ; but such forbearance proceeds usually from necessity rather than choice, and it would be hazardous to rely upon its continuance, if the church were in distress. The established Church of Scotland is, in some respects, scarcely more defensible than that of Ireland. It is the church of a minority ; and it would puzzle an able casuist to discover its claims to superior privileges over either of its Presbyterian rivals. Its doctrines are not purer, its constitution is not more apostolical, its practice not more perfect than theirs ; and no one, who has mixed in Scottish society, will venture to say that it lives in the affections of its Free Church brother, or is an object of love and admiration to its United Pres-

byterian sister. When the Irish Church falls, the days of the Scottish establishment may easily be numbered. Having already lost all the privileges of a State church, except the modest manses and teinds of the clergy, and a royal pageant remarkable only for insignificance, its fall would scarcely be felt beyond the limits of the ancient realm of Scotland.

The grant to Maynooth has been strangely mixed up with the question of the Irish Church ; and the admission of the leader of the opposition, that the disendowment of that church would involve the withdrawal of State support from the Roman Catholic college, was made with ill-concealed reluctance. This admission has, however, floated into popularity a measure, otherwise of doubtful acceptance, with any large section of Protestants in the United Kingdom ; and the withdrawal of the Maynooth grant has become, much more than the question of the Irish Church, the rallying point of a party. The sincere and anxious Protestant concurs in this opinion, if in no other, with the sincere and zealous Rationalist, that Catholicism and Catholics are to be regarded with distrust, and at best to be tolerated with reluctance. The admission of the Parliamentary leader soon called forth an expression of this feeling, in the form of a resolution emanating from a Scotch member, which was aptly described by another member, on the same side of the House, as an apple of discord thrown among the ranks of the party. The resolution was lost on a division ; but another resolution, scarcely differing in principle, was subsequently carried.

The College of Maynooth derives its origin from an act of the Irish parliament, passed five years before the union, which authorised an academy to be founded and endowed in Ireland, for the education of persons professing the Roman Catholic religion. In the original act, no allusion is made to the education of the Catholic priesthood ;

and, although the college was chiefly intended for their use, it was also designed for the education of the lay members of the Catholic Church.<sup>1</sup> The original grant, for the support of this college, dates as far back as 1796, and amounted to nearly 8,000*l.* After several fluctuations, it was fixed by the Imperial Parliament, in 1813, at 9,700*l.*; and in 1845, during the administration of Sir R. Peel, it was made a charge on the consolidated fund, and augmented to 26,360*l.* This small grant is the only act of grace ever conferred upon the Catholic population of Ireland, either by the Irish or Imperial Parliament. It originated with an Irish parliament, in which no Roman Catholic had a seat; it was continued and augmented by the Imperial parliament, when exclusively Protestant; and it was placed on its present footing of permanence by the ablest and farthest-seeing minister England has produced in recent times. The importance he attached to the maintenance of this grant, was evinced by the large augmentation he obtained for it, and the exertions he used to give it stability, and to remove it from the arena of party strife. Yet it is now proposed to scatter to the winds, without even a formal discussion, all these thoughtful arrangements, on what I do not hesitate to call a flimsy and unworthy pretext. The other measures of Sir R. Peel have firmly stood the test of time, and we may venture with little hesitation to predict, that the increased endowment he obtained for Maynooth will also be maintained; nor will the grass be suffered in our day to grow in its halls. The British taxpayer may indeed complain, with some show of justice, that the burden should be local and not imperial; and in the new arrangements, this charge might, with great propriety, be removed from the consolidated fund, and placed upon the church lands of Ireland.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Studium Generale*, p. 74 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> If this provision for the education of the Roman Catholic clergy of

Those who watch over Roman Catholic interests in Ireland have probably little of the extraordinary sagacity commonly attributed to them; but they must belamentably unfit for the position they occupy, if they submit to so serious a loss, in order to acquire what would then be truly a sentimental gain. They ought to know that if they show due forbearance and proper firmness, the British public will, in the end, be ready to grant the fullest measure of justice to the Catholics of Ireland; while in return, it will expect them to banish the harsh feelings of the past, and to emulate their coreligionists in England and Scotland, of British extraction, in devotion and loyalty to the common country, of which they have the good fortune to be citizens.

Whether the time has arrived for the permanent settlement of the church question in Ireland, it is difficult to affirm; but a hasty settlement of so great and momentous a question is to be earnestly deprecated, and crude legislation anxiously avoided. The financial ability and rhetorical powers of the leader of the movement are undoubted; but he has exhibited, in the new position he has taken up, all the impetuosity of a neophyte, and those who, like the writer, have read his once celebrated work, will pause before they place full confidence in so uncertain a guide. He is the only layman of any repute in Europe, who has ever ventured to maintain the infallibility of the Church of England, in regard to fundamental truths; who

Ireland be done away, the Divinity School of Trinity College, Dublin, will have some difficulty in preserving any of its privileges; and even Oxford and Cambridge will find their strongholds sensibly weakened. This fresh demand upon the slender resources of the Roman Catholics of Ireland, notwithstanding the jaunty remarks of some of their representatives in Parliament, will be felt by them to be a new and unfair burden, and the attempt to levy it cannot fail to augment the discontent of the country. A rate in aid from the Catholic world, or rather from our Gallic neighbours, might no doubt be easily obtained for this object; but would such a result conduce to the honour or safety of the British Empire?

has objected to the exercise of private judgment, unless it coincide with and confirm catholic truth; who has described the modern practice of free thought among Protestants, as the fruitful parent of laxity in religion; and who has not hesitated to defend the maintenance of the Protestant establishment in Ireland, on the astounding assumption, that the 'Imperial Legislature has been qualified to take, and has taken in point of fact, a sounder view of religious truth than the majority of the people of Ireland, in their destitute and uninstructed state.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The State in its Relations with the Church*, vol. ii. p. 14. 'Upon us of this day has fallen (and we shrink not from it, but welcome it as a high and glorious, though an arduous, duty) the defence of the reformed Catholic Church in Ireland as the religious establishment of the country' (p. 13). The question is one 'of spiritual truth in Ireland, arrayed against a Church which we sorrowfully hold to have hidden the light that is in her amidst the darkness of her false traditions, and which adds to the evils of false doctrine those of schism.' (*Ibid.* p. 17.) To describe the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church as false, and darkened by false traditions, may perhaps be excused in a polemical work; but to say that to the evils of false doctrine she adds the evils of schism, although doubtless the habitual language of an extravagant school, is wholly without excuse in a serious writer. Such language stands in painful contrast with the references to the same church in the writings of the great retired statesman of France, the earnestness of whose Protestant feelings no one will venture to dispute. The new idol set up by the same author (for the old divines of the Church of England would never have acknowledged it) has been proclaimed to the world in language which, I confess, I was not prepared to find in any thoughtful work. In the separation of religion from government, we are told, that we see a change which seems to indicate the ripening of a harvest of divine vengeance: 'firstly, because it asserts practical atheism, that is, a great and moral human agency, knowingly, deliberately, and permanently divested of regard to God; secondly, because it asserts that atheism in the most authentic form, namely, by casting out its antagonist, religion, from what are most permanent and most authoritative among men, their public politics; thirdly, because the assertion is made not by individuals alone, but by masses, invested with political power, and, under the most wretched infatuation, claiming it as a right of freedom thus to banish themselves from the Divine protection and regard.' (*Ibid.* p. 386.)—While these pages were passing through the press, an exposition of his present opinions on this subject has been published by Mr. Gladstone. The timid legislator will perhaps be reassured, when he learns, on unquestionable authority, that the appalling statement, just quoted, of the sin of compassing the separation of Church and State, may now be safely disregarded; and that when the State is changed, 'either by some Revolution of institutions from their summit to their base, or by a



The extreme, I had almost said indecent, haste which characterised the proceedings of the late House of Commons in dealing with so grave a question, will, it is to be hoped, be avoided by the new Parliament. In considering the subject, I will venture to view it under aspects, assumed to be impossible, by certain exponents of public opinion in England. The question at issue is imperial in importance, and as a precedent; but, in its immediate operation, it is local and Irish. The opinions of the Irish nation have therefore a claim to special consideration, in the same way and to the same extent as those of the Scottish nation on a question mainly affecting Scottish interests. The Roman Catholic, the Episcopal Protestant, the Presbyterian, the Methodist have all a right to be heard and to put forth their views as strongly as they think proper. But the English Dissenter, or Scottish Presbyterian, mistakes his position in the empire, when he presumes from an affected eminence to look down upon the Roman Catholics of Ireland, and to refuse them their full rights as citizens, on the ground, forsooth, that their faith is erroneous and their worship idolatrous. The wealthy Unitarian or the avowed infidel, however heterodox his opinions, escapes with impunity, while the Catholic is hunted to death with a zeal which savours strongly of carnal hatred. The fruits of this intemperance among the evangelical members of the Protestant churches are to be seen in the growth of a counter-feeling in favour of Catholicity, a retrograde movement for which the feeble violence of ultra-Protestantism is largely responsible. The Protestant zealot of England or Scotland has

silent and surer process,' and 'the community itself is split and severed into opinions and communions, which, whatever their concurrence in the basis of Christian belief, are hostile in regard to the point at issue,' then 'the attempt to maintain an Established Church becomes an error fatal to the peace, dangerous perhaps even to the life, of civil society.'—*A Chapter of Autobiography*, pp. 60, 61.



no right to intervene with a spiritual interdict in this Irish issue, nor to assume the position of an autocrat, where questions of religious belief are involved.

The endowment of the Roman Catholic Church has been the cherished wish of almost every English statesman since the end of the last century; and if it does not soon take place, at least to a partial extent, the cause will be found in the unwillingness of that church to receive aid from the State, and not in the unseemly violence of the extreme Protestant. In considering the possible solutions of this church question, I will presume to treat the assumption of absolute truth, on the part of any individual, or of any collective number of individuals, even if they assume the imposing appellation of a church, as simply an expression of strong opinion from fallible men, and liable, like other expressions of strong opinion, to be set aside, if unsupported by sufficient proofs.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is idle to proclaim the right of private judgment and to impose, directly, or indirectly, a pecuniary or civil disability on those who dissent from the prevalent opinions of a country. The Roman Catholic and Unitarian contribute to the revenues of the State, and have as unquestionable a right to their share of the expenditure as the most orthodox Protestant. Is the soldier who has risked his life in defence of his country to be deprived, at his last solemn moments, of the consolations of his pastor, because a certain number of his countrymen consider the religious views of that pastor to be erroneous? Are these confident men so sure that they may not, even now, be themselves grievously mistaken on many points? The Roman Catholic, they commonly allege, holds all the essentials of the Christian faith, but has overlaid them with error. Have the most orthodox churches of Protestantism not held, at certain periods of their history, opinions now universally acknowledged to be erroneous, and acted upon them? After the lapse of above two thousand years, Europe witnessed the revival of human sacrifices, in a darker and, if possible, more repulsive form than before, in order to avert the supposed influence of malignant beings upon man. The youthful virgin—

‘*Casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso*’—

was anew to perish by a miserable death, the victim of these sad delusions. Let any one read the ordinances passed by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, scarcely two hundred years ago, on the subject of witchcraft and pactions with the devil, and venture to assert that the ministers and elders of that church did not then fall into grievous error, and mix the

The disestablishment of the Irish Church, whenever the legislature shall determine upon it, involves, as a legitimate consequence, its immediate and absolute dis-endowment. In conformity with the desire uniformly manifested of late years by parliament, to avoid even the semblance of individual hardship, the rights of the clergy to the incomes of the offices they hold will, no doubt, be scrupulously respected; but their prospective losses will scarcely be taken into consideration. Farther than this, they have no special claim to the property hitherto held by them, as the clergy of the State church; neither to the revenues, nor to the buildings, nor to any of their other privileges; and I am on this point reluctantly forced to differ from the ablest living authority on this subject. In his memorable speech last summer in the House of Lords, Earl Grey, while advocating a large reduction of the revenues of the Established Church, and the application of the saving effected to the use of the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian churches in Ireland, intimated that the Church should be tenderly dealt with, and that the case was one eminently fitted for compromise. It appears to me, on the contrary, to be a case where a compromise, in favour of the wealthy portion of the community, would be only a new form of injustice, and would leave behind the sting of a fresh wrong. The

error with religion. Nor were other orthodox churches free from the same taint. Yet the Fathers of that day appealed to the same standards as their successors do now, and laid claim to the same exclusive possession of pure and unalloyed truth. Has any event since occurred to warrant the latter in claiming absolute immunity from error, and in setting up themselves and their opinions on a pinnacle of surpassing height, and insisting that the State shall refuse to endow what they deem to be error? Is not this indirectly to impose a religious disability? Are these churches all so unanimous in their opinions, and have not some of them shifted ground, and made an alliance with principles and practices once held in abhorrence? What would the early divines of some of the churches of the Evangelical Alliance have said, if they had lived to see light and darkness entering into communion, the prelatist and anti-prelatist kissing hands?

members of the present Establishment in Ireland have ample means to provide for their own spiritual wants; and they cannot, with any show of truth, sue for special favour on the plea of poverty. An incomplete settlement of this kind, not built upon the firm foundation of equity, would fail to conciliate the Protestant, and could not be expected to satisfy the Catholic. No measure, indeed, could be devised more fatal to the character or interest of any portion of the Protestant community, than to allow them to carry off, as public spoil, that to which, in strict justice, they are not entitled.

The church question in Ireland may be dealt with in either of two ways without violating the principles of justice. The property of the Church may be devoted to secular objects, and the support of religion left entirely to the so-called voluntary system, each religious body providing for the spiritual wants of its own members; or, the revenues of the Church, as they become year by year available, may be divided among the religious communities, for spiritual purposes, in proportion to their numerical strength in the country. The former scheme has, of late, grown surprisingly in favour, even amongst those who, a short time ago, were strongly opposed to voluntaryism. The key to this rapid change in popular feeling is not, I am afraid, to be found in the progress of enlightened principle, or in the spread of kindly and brotherly sentiments among the great Christian communions. It is rather to be found in the revival of the old anti-papal spirit, under a new phase, and in a form unworthy of a free and candid people. To tolerate the Roman Catholic is now admitted to be a duty; but the admission was not made, till toleration became a necessity of the State. To treat the Roman Catholic as an equal is, even now, only admitted with large reservation; and the present form this reservation assumes, is the non-

endowment of error. An active and energetic party, in modern phrase, a party of action, composed partly of zealous Protestants who dissent from the Church, partly of zealous unbelievers who dissent from Christianity, has long, it is true, been opposed to all State endowments for religion ; and the opinions consistently maintained by the members of this party are fully entitled to respect and consideration. But, till lately, it was in a small minority throughout the United Kingdom, more especially in Scotland and the North of Ireland, where, among Dissenters, its principles were stoutly opposed by the adherents of the Free Church and of the General Assembly. A sudden change of opinion has, however, recently occurred ; and the old opponents of State aid to religion have received a large accession of recruits, but a doubtful augmentation of strength. The opponents of to-day to State aid, were willing yesterday to accept aid from the State, provided it could be obtained on their own terms ; and in Ireland, they were even importunately asking for an increase of the Regium Donum. But they never have had any scruple in requiring Roman Catholics to contribute to the support of Protestant opinions ; and they have long been quiet spectators of the endowment of the Arian heresy in Ulster. That the smallest dole should be proposed for the Roman Catholic Church has, however, suddenly awakened all their susceptibilities ; and they now protest, in the most solemn terms, against any portion of the old church property of Ireland being used for the support of what they deem to be error. Never has any body of men, claiming to stand in the front ranks of enlightenment and intelligence, exhibited a more deplorable example of inconsistency and unfairness ; never has the sacred precept, to do unto all men in like manner as you would that they should do unto you, been more recklessly set at naught ; and never, I will venture to

add, has a more fatal mistake been committed by any large and responsible section of a community. A tender conscience is always to be treated with respect, even when its suggestions proceed from weakness rather than sound principle; but the scrupulous conscience, which has borne with placid equanimity, for many long years, a Protestant establishment and a Presbyterian endowment in Ireland, and has never complained, although Catholics have had to contribute to both, but now stands aghast, on the alleged ground of high principle, at the possibility of like privileges being extended to others, is entitled to no respect whatever.

The portion of the fruits of the land, originally set apart for the support of Divine worship in Ireland, has suffered a steady diminution, from the time of the Reformation almost to the present day. Many of the early holders of ecclesiastical preferments appropriated to their own use, by fraudulent exchanges and other means, the possessions of their sees and benefices, and alienated irrevocably large portions of the church property.<sup>1</sup> In recent times, the payment of tithes, by the Catholic occupiers of the soil to a Protestant clergy, became so intolerable a grievance, that a large portion of the tithes had to be surrendered, in order to make the residue a first charge on the property of the landlord. Although purchased on rather lavish terms, the security is the best the country can offer, and the public trustee can scarcely

<sup>1</sup> As an illustration, I may refer to the case of the see of Kildare:—Alexander Craik was appointed, in the second year of the reign of Elizabeth, to that see, then of considerable value, and also to the deanery of St. Patrick's. The revenues of the bishopric and deanery did not, however, suffice for this unscrupulous bishop. 'He exchanged,' says Ware, 'all the manors and lands of the bishopric for some tithes of little value. By this exchange the ancient see of Kildare was reduced to a most shameful poverty. Having sat only three years and some months, he died in 1564; but in that short time he did more mischief to his see than his successors have ever been able to repair.'—Harris's *Ware*, i. 391.

desire a better. The whole revenues of the Established Church in Ireland amount nearly to six hundred thousand pounds; a large sum it is true, but insufficient for the support of all the clergy of the country. Those who regard public aid to religion in any form, as an evil, will clamour for converting the Church property into money, knowing that, in that form, it will be easily dissipated; but thoughtful men will hesitate, before they throw away so large a revenue, belonging to a poor and distressed country like Ireland. No operation will be easier than to absorb the property of the Irish Church, without making anyone apparently the richer. There are everywhere harpies ready to pounce on such prey; and nowhere are they more numerous or voracious than in Ireland. If the income of the Church be capitalised, the residue, after meeting all demands, will be slender enough; and it is scarce worth while discussing to what uses it should be applied. The reclamation of the bogs of Ireland, the excavation of harbours in the rocks of her iron-bound shores, the removal of obstructions from her great rivers, the construction of public works in her decaying towns, the extension of railways to her wild western districts, and other similar schemes, will be urged by a host of crafty speculators and hungry projectors. The results may easily be described: disturbance of regular industry, disappointment, turbulence, and heavy engagements, above the value of the Church property, to be in the end paid by the British tax-payer. It is easy to discover the master-spirit of this scheme, which would sweep away every old endowment in Ireland, and leave her social condition, like her treeless hills and plains, naked and bare beyond that of any other country in Europe. The experiment is a novel one in the Old World, and, if attempted anywhere, ought not in the first instance to be tried in Ireland. It has perhaps been suggested by the old



adage, that new experiments are to be made on a worthless body; but this principle must always be accepted with reserve, and Ireland is not the country a prudent man would select for the field of his first operations.

But, before coming to a conclusion on this momentous question, it is needful to extend our view for a little beyond the shores of Ireland, and to consider the influence its settlement may have on the great country with which Ireland is united. Ireland, it must never be forgotten, is a portion of the British Empire, and very close to its heart. A torrent of passionate language may, for the moment, persuade those who are in the habit of being guided by the accredited leaders and organs of a party, but it will not alter the real condition of things; nor will it save a nation, any more than an individual, from the serious consequences of hearkening to partial statements and unwise counsels. To declare that the fall of the Irish branch will not affect the stability of the Church of England is manifestly absurd. The arguments, adduced in support of this paradoxical assertion, will carry weight with none, except those who are willing to be deceived. No one, we are assured, now proposes to meddle with the Church in England. The monstrous injustice of the Irish Establishment has so dazzled the eyes of the English reformer, that he no longer sees any flaws even in the principle of the great Establishment at home. It is a most serious grievance, we are told, that one man in Ireland should have his clerical bill paid by the public; another, a part of his bill; while six other men have to pay their own. It is no grievance whatever, we are assured, and nobody complains of it, that five men in England are so lucky as to have their bills paid, while three others are left to shift for themselves. But there are stratagems in political, as well as in actual warfare; and to lull the defenders of an ancient stronghold into false security, by



pacific assurances, is the usual precursor of an intended attack. The party of action find it, moreover, convenient to suspend operations in England, while their new allies require aid in the campaign they have opened in Ireland.

Let us, however, assume that the reassuring language, addressed of late, with so much earnestness, to the Church of England, is used in good faith, and let us briefly inquire to what consequences it will lead. England is to be governed, we are informed, according to the old ideas; Ireland, according to the new. England is to enjoy the inestimable advantage of a State church; Ireland, the great privilege of having none. England is to preserve, for a favoured portion of her population, the rich endowments she values so highly, and especially those derived from the old Catholic times; Ireland is to be gladdened with beholding the tiny residue of her old endowments dispersed for ever, so that her people may escape the snares of wealth and riches. In England, Europe will behold a Protestant population richly endowed; in Ireland, she will see a Catholic population, very numerous and very poor, without any provision whatever; and she will, perhaps, ask, Why is this so? The Irish colleges in Paris and Rome will be crowded with poverty-stricken students; and Europe will again ask, Why is this so? But the opinion of Europe may be safely disregarded, provided the Catholics of Ireland are satisfied, when they find that the Church of Ireland has been pulled down, that the old endowments of the country have been scattered, that the College of Maynooth has been disendowed, and the Church of England made stronger than ever!

It is almost dangerous to pursue this discussion further. No one can mean seriously to defend such an arrangement. The Church of England knows well she must be prepared to share the fortunes of the Irish branch. The

struggle may come a little later, but the issue is certain. The party of action, largely reinforced, will not be slow to take advantage of the anomalous arrangements in the two islands, and will demand, with irresistible force, the establishment of religious equality throughout the empire. The current of public opinion is setting so strongly against all privileges, founded on the assumed superiority of one man over his fellow, in matters of religious belief, that the Church of England must consider well how to conform herself to the new order of things, or even her strength will prove unavailing against the coming tempest. Nor let her confide in her wealth and rich possessions, sources of power and security in quiet times, but of weakness and danger in times of rapid change. A democratic government, towards which England has lately made such large advances, will have new and expensive wants to gratify; and the tide of commercial prosperity, which has of late years enabled the State vessel to float so freely, may not always continue to flow in the same direction. A rich and exclusive ecclesiastical corporation will find itself powerless to resist the demands of the masses, unless the future history of England be wholly inconsistent with the past, and with the history of every other nation of Europe. It may not be possible eventually to save the valuable institutions of England; but it is certainly possible, in the meantime, to strengthen them by a frank act of justice, by admitting to their advantages, without favour or affection, every subject of the realm. This object may be partially attained by removing religious tests and observances where they are merely obstructive, and keep conscientious men out, without conferring any benefit upon others. But it will not be fully attained, till a part of the ample revenues of the Church is distributed among the other religious bodies of the country.

A satisfactory settlement of this question in Ireland

presents a difficulty, which does not occur in England, arising from the serious dilapidation of the ecclesiastical property of Ireland during the last three hundred years.<sup>1</sup> The church property, even when the present life interests have expired, will be insufficient for the entire support of Divine worship in all the churches of Ireland. I am not ashamed to defend the retention of this property for its original purpose, the maintenance of the worship of God throughout the whole country. But the change in the social condition of the people, and the growth of a large middle class, suggest and justify an important modification in the old plan. The upper and middle classes of society, now a large portion of the population, are able to pay their own clergy, and to provide for their own spiritual as well as temporal wants. But the poor and humbler classes can ill afford to meet any such demand upon their slender resources; and where it has been exacted for any long period of time, as in the case of the Catholic population of Ireland, the result has not been encouraging. Dissenters will, doubtless, point triumphantly to the success in their case of the voluntary system; but, on inquiry, it will be found that few of the indigent belong to their society, and that the system presses with great severity upon their humbler adherents.<sup>2</sup> The rich may be ap-

<sup>1</sup> The Archbishop of Armagh stated lately in the House of Lords, that the Church of Ireland has now just one-eighth of the tithes granted by Henry II. at the council of Cashel; and as the same fraction happens also to express the proportion of the church population of Ireland to the whole population of the country, he defended, on this ground, the retention of the present tithes by the members of the Church. Is the Archbishop prepared to support a measure for the recovery, from the lay impropiators and others, of the remaining seven-eighths of the original tithes, for the benefit of the Roman Catholics and Non-conformists? Such a settlement would doubtless be most welcome to the Catholic Church; and even the Presbyterian could hardly resist so large a bribe, however deeply he might grieve to see the ancient church restored to more than its pristine splendour.

<sup>2</sup> 'I have always believed,' says Earl Grey, 'and I still believe, that in an old country like ours, the voluntary system cannot adequately provide for its spiritual requirements. I also hold that it is not for the true interest, either

pealed to, but in later times they have failed to provide education for the masses of the people without aid from the State; and private benevolence, even in the great centres of wealth, is already strained to its limit. In England, individual effort might, perhaps, do something; in Ireland, except in one or two favoured spots, it will do nothing. Nor can I approve of a system, which will make the poor dependent on the charity of their wealthy neighbours, for that which they are entitled to claim as their right and inheritance. The property of the Church is, in reality, the property of the nation, to be used for the spiritual benefit of the people at large. When the Church of the Reformation failed to enforce conformity, and to establish herself as the church of the whole nation, she ought, in common fairness, to have resigned a portion of the Church property.

The arrangements of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland suggest a simple and complete solution of the difficult question we are now considering. The State makes a free gift to the ministers of that church, but does not in any way interfere with its teaching or discipline. It not only expects, but requires, the lay members of the church to aid in the support of their ministers. Although not so stated in express terms, the *Regium Donum* may be regarded as a payment by the State to the Presbyterian Church, on behalf of the poorer Presbyterians, who are unable to pay for themselves. The State takes no cognizance of the dogmatic views held by the recipients of this bounty; among whom, as is well known, are to be found persons holding widely diverse opinions, on some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith. Neither does the State interfere in the appointment of the

of the clergy or of the laity of any church, that the pastors should be solely and exclusively dependent on the pecuniary contributions of their flocks.'—  
Speech in the House of Lords *Times*, June 23, 1868.

ministers, nor with the proceedings of the church courts. As the condition of endowing a new congregation, the State only asks for proof that the application is made in good faith, and therefore requires, that the congregation shall have been formed for a certain time, that it shall be composed of not less than a specified number of families, and that a fixed stipend, in addition to the government allowance, shall be secured to the minister.

According to the proposal of the writer, the revenues arising from the tithes and other ecclesiastical property of Ireland, as they gradually accrue, on the expiration of the present life interests, should be divided among the religious bodies of the country, in proportion to the respective numbers of their members. A readjustment should be made, to meet any changes in the religious census, at certain fixed, but long intervals of time, such, for example, as every twenty-five or fifty years. The conditions now attached to the *Regium Donum*, in order to prevent abuse, would no longer be necessary, as the sum available for each church would be fixed. The application of the funds should be left entirely to the respective churches, or religious communities, without any interference on the part of the State; but, with this condition, that they are to be strictly applied to the spiritual benefit of the people, and particularly of the humbler classes.

The Divinity School of the University of Dublin, the College of Maynooth, and the Theological College at Belfast, would very properly be provided for, out of the funds assigned to the churches with which they are connected. Whether the churches adopted this course or not, the two latter colleges should certainly cease to be a charge on the general taxes of the country. With the new provision for the Presbyterian clergy, the *Regium Donum* would, as a matter of course, disappear from the

annual votes of the House of Commons. It will, probably, not be considered unreasonable to ask for the continuance of a portion of these grants, till the Irish funds become available.

The executive government and the legislature, while not interfering, in any respect, with the arrangements of the churches, ought, nevertheless, to take the strictest precautions, in order to prevent further waste of the property. The collection of the revenues and the management of the property should not, on any account, be entrusted to a Board of Commissioners, but should be made the business of a department of the government, and kept under the supervision of parliament. A large portion of the Church property has, unfortunately, been made a fixed charge, and cannot be augmented; but there are considerable estates remaining which, by judicious management, may be greatly increased in value.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy of Ireland have more than once declared that they will not become dependents of the State, nor consent to a State payment for the Catholic clergy; and I can appreciate the motives which have rendered them unwilling to accept a reluctant allowance from the British Treasury. But it would be a very different thing to receive a portion of the tithes of the country, in order to devote them to the spiritual relief of the poor. Such an arrangement, as I have ventured to propose, would not, in any way, compromise the independence of the Church, nor lower its clergy in the estimation of the people. The available income, after providing for the College of Maynooth, would be very considerable, and would relieve many a poor man's family from payments which now press heavily upon them. A large sum would still require to be raised from private sources; and, even with the relief I recommend, the Roman Catholic population of Ireland would have



very heavy burdens to bear. The poor of that communion are so many, and the rich so few, that the struggle of the middle class to acquire a moderate competency, after the claims of religion and charity have been settled, will always be very great. But let no one venture to say, that the condition of the humbler classes would not be sensibly improved, by removing so large a portion of one of their heavy burdens.

The new arrangement would make the Presbyterian Church in Ireland even more independent than at present, and would relieve it from the unpleasant and anomalous position of being a stipendiary of the State. This church has always asserted, that the terms of the plantation of Ulster gave it a claim to, at least, a part of the tithes of that district of Ireland; and unquestionably some of the Presbyterian ministers, who came over with the first Scotch settlers, were allowed to receive the tithes of the parishes in which they ministered. The proposed arrangement would restore this church to its proper position in the North of Ireland. The substantial gain would also be considerable; as its share of the ecclesiastical revenues of the country would, at least, be double the present amount of the *Regium Donum*.

The Anglican Church would receive about the same sum annually as the Presbyterian Church; and, considering the wealth of its members, it should have no difficulty in maintaining itself in a state of efficiency, and in making ample provision for the different orders of its clergy.

The Methodists, the Covenanters, and smaller religious bodies have hitherto declined to accept aid from the State. Some of them might, perhaps, take their share of the ecclesiastical property of the country, if unshackled by any condition which could interfere with their independence; others would probably refuse. The latter could, in that case, scarcely complain of any great hardship.

I deem it to be scarcely relevant to my purpose, to discuss the probable influence of a general division of the tithes, upon the future prospects of Protestantism and Catholicism in Ireland ; but a few remarks on this subject may not be altogether out of place. Religious movements are rare events in history, and the most sagacious observer can seldom foresee their occurrence, or trace beforehand their course. The arrangement, I have attempted to advocate, would probably neither aid the progress of Catholicism on the one hand, nor of Protestantism on the other ; nor is it likely to act as a drag upon either of them. It would leave each religion free, while it would secure a provision for the spiritual wants of the poorer classes. The statement often put forth that, unless the Established Church be maintained, Protestantism must succumb before Popery in Ireland, is somewhat startling, accompanied, as it usually is, by the counter-statement, that Protestantism is as remarkable for its purity, as Popery for its corruption. Things pure are commonly found, in this world, to be strong and vigorous ; things corrupt, to be weak and unhealthy. The downfall of the papacy, we are assured, is imminent ; and the vision of ancient as well as modern seers, the dethronement of the spiritual despot of the west, is to be realised in our day ; while we are, at the same time, solemnly warned of the urgent danger to Protestant liberty and Protestant truth, from the machinations of the Pope and his counsellors at Rome. The laws of England, it is maintained, cannot be applied, without favour or affection, to all the inhabitants of the realm, so long as a portion of those inhabitants acknowledge a foreign bishop to be the spiritual head of their church, and recognise his authority in religious questions and in ecclesiastical appointments. If such sentiments and arguments are to influence the legislature, the case is hopeless indeed ; and the conso-

lidation of the British Empire must be abandoned as a vain dream. It is the old argument against admitting Roman Catholics to civil offices, and the other privileges of citizens, in a free State ; but, when those privileges have been conceded, the argument falls to the ground. The bishops of the Catholic Church are now eligible to high office in the State, and in Ireland, some of them have already filled offices of great trust and importance. Those offices, it is true, have not carried emolument ; but they are not, on that account, the less offices of trust. Is England then to recognise the position, and avail herself of the services, of the Roman Catholic bishop, whose nomination must be sanctioned by the Pope, and at the same time to declare, that to relieve the poverty of four millions of poor Roman Catholics in Ireland, by allowing a portion of the old tithes of the country to be paid to their pastors, would be a violation of principle and an act of impiety ?

But the most satisfactory settlement of this church question, or of any other question affecting the interests of Ireland, will do little to improve the country, or give it a healthier tone, unless the people of all classes and of every creed assume kindlier feelings towards one another. The dislike and contempt of the native Irish, which prevailed among the English settlers before the Reformation, survive to this day, and have had the natural effect of lowering the moral character of the dominant, as well as of the subject race. The poor Irish Catholic, descended with little admixture from the old Celtic inhabitants of the island, has had few opportunities at home of mingling, or holding intercourse with others. We have seen how he was held at bay by the English conqueror ; how his apparel, his language, his religion were successively proscribed in later times. The turbulent and almost savage native chiefs were gradually subdued, but only to be re-

placed by strangers, who had little sympathy with the people, and abhorred their religion. No one can claim for the old Irish race the character of a high people, and their inferiority to their Anglo-Norman conquerors, together with the harsh treatment they received, led, as might be expected, to feelings of hatred and acts of turbulence. But, although in some respects inferior to the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries, the Irish have exhibited many fine qualities; and they may yet perform, under happier conditions, an important part in the history of the human family. They have always displayed a fine artistic taste, and their skill in the use of musical instruments, at the time of the English conquest, is described by Giraldus, whose testimony, when in their favour, may be received without reserve, as incomparably superior to that of any other nation with which he was acquainted.<sup>1</sup> They have also given abundant proof, during the last three hundred years, of military genius; and Irish exiles, or their descendants, have risen to the highest commands in almost every army of Europe. Nor has the Irish soldier failed in his duty when serving in the ranks of the British army; and in steady discipline, undaunted bravery, and cheerful endurance of hardship, he has not been excelled even by the hardy sons of North Britain. In the struggle with a civilisation greatly in advance of its own, the Celtic race of Ireland has not fallen a prey, like the inferior races of man, to sensual vices, and gradually melted away; on the contrary, it has multiplied exceedingly, and the centres of British industry, the Australian colonies, and, above all, the United States of America, swarm with a population of Irish descent.

<sup>1</sup> 'In musicis instrumentis commendabilem invenio gentis istius diligentiam. In quibus, præ omni natione quam vidimus, incomparabiliter instructa est. Non enim in his, sicut in Britannicis quibus assueti sumus instrumentis, tarda et morosa est modulatio, verum velox et præceps, suavis tamen et jocunda sonoritas.'—Giraldus, *Topographia Hibernica*, iii. cap. xi.

The consequences of the ill-usage of centuries cannot be removed in a day, especially when a new form of petty torture, almost as intolerable as the old tyranny, has been brought into play, and has given little rest to its victim. The contemptuous tone habitually used by the vulgar-minded Protestant, and such are unhappily too common among all classes of society in Ireland, when referring to 'papists' and 'priests,' must be heard, in order that its mischievous effects upon a great population may be understood. The real or affected assumption of piety, which often accompanies the most uncharitable insinuations, and not unfrequently positive misstatements, serves to heighten the effect of the platform oration, but does incalculable mischief to the cause of order and good government.

No one can object to the use of legitimate means to enlighten those who are deemed to be in error, and to give them juster views of their religious and moral duties; but the systematic efforts to convert the Roman Catholics of Ireland, by the skilful application of capital, begun 150 years ago by Primate Boulter, and continued, in one form or another, to the present day, admits of no defence. After the Irish famine, a new impulse was given to this peculiar traffic; and an organised attempt was made to change the religious faith of a nation, by the free, and somewhat unscrupulous, use of an almost exhaustless purse. But there are things which money will not purchase; and the Irish Catholic has not submitted to the degradation of bartering his principles for a mess of pottage. Had these efforts been confined to this one occasion, they would have been comparatively harmless; but they are, even now, continued in almost every village in Ireland where a zealous Protestant resides. The duty of bringing the Scriptures home to every hearth is deemed sufficient to justify the use of the most objection-

able means, and a constant irritation is kept up in the minds of the Catholic population, without any good result. A few of the less scrupulous accept the tracts, and read occasionally a chapter in the Protestant version of the Bible, in order to obtain the substantial rewards; and an occasional young convert is withdrawn from the paternal roof, and estranged from her natural protectors. In the west of Ireland, a vast missionary work was begun some years ago, and, if the elaborate reports of its success could be relied on, a movement, second only in importance to the introduction of Christianity into the island, was in progress. Twenty thousand converts to the Protestant faith were alleged to have been made in the diocese of Tuam alone; the public mind of England was thoroughly stirred; large sums of money were subscribed; and many began to think that Ireland was at last to be the scene of a great event. But the stern figures of the census rudely tore off the mask, and showed that, where 20,000 converts had been claimed, the whole Protestant population was less by some thousands than that number.<sup>1</sup> A high authority on this subject in Ireland has lately had the effrontery, to compare this suspicious transaction, with the history of the early Christian converts, as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles; and, without offering one tittle of proof or evidence, he has gravely asked the assembled Church Congress at Dublin to assume, that of the 20,000 alleged converts, 5,000 have relapsed; 10,000 have emigrated; and 5,000, 'say one-fourth,' remain to this day witnesses to the truth. As the natural result of these ill-directed efforts, the jealousy of the Catholic priest is

<sup>1</sup> 'The census returns describe the whole church population of the diocese of Tuam in 1861 as 17,000. Where are these 20,000 converts?' The explanation given by the speaker is referred to in the text.—Address by the Hon. and Rev. W. C. Plunket. Report of Proceedings of the Church Congress: *Dublin Evening Mail*, Oct. 1, 1868.



aroused, his interference is resented as a crime, and a class antagonism of the worst possible kind is produced.<sup>1</sup>

But the evil is not confined within the narrow limits of these isolated attempts ; it ramifies through the relations of social life, and interferes with the fair employment of labour. The Catholic female servant is now admitted into few Protestant families, especially in the North of Ireland ; and the cruel wrong thus inflicted, although submitted to in silence, sinks deeply into the soul, and is carried in many cases to the shores of America, where it helps to foster, among the Irish emigrants, the remembrance of the old wrongs inflicted by the mother-country. Fifty years ago, a better state of feeling existed ; and no distinction was made between Catholic and Protestant, when they tendered their services. The assembling of the whole household at family prayers has been the excuse, the dislike to the Roman Catholic the cause, of the new practice. The injury inflicted has been most unmerited, as the finest examples of scrupulous integrity, and devoted attachment to the families with whom they lived, were found among the Roman Catholic domestics of Ireland. I will not deny that the Ultramontane spirit, of late so prevalent, has had some influence in augmenting the repulsion on the Catholic side ; and that the poor

<sup>1</sup> Let us imagine a country in which the wealthy inhabitants are chiefly Unitarians ; the poor, Evangelical Protestants. If the former were to publish in such a country a new translation of the Scriptures, in accordance with the readings of the best manuscripts, and with the latest conclusions of the ablest critics, noting particularly the passages in the common version of doubtful authenticity, and omitting those which are acknowledged to be spurious ; if they were industriously to distribute cheap editions of this version, together with tracts, in which the doctrine of the Trinity was held up to contempt and contumely ; and if they were further to use active means to induce young children to read these publications, even without the knowledge of their parents, and to reward them for so doing ; what, we may ask, would be the probable result ? Would the Protestant parent or pastor submit tamely to this interference ? Or would such a procedure be likely to promote good will among men, or to improve, either the temporal, or spiritual condition of a people ?

Roman Catholic owes little either to Protestant, or Catholic zealot ; but finds, to her sorrow, that the extravagant efforts of both, for her spiritual welfare, have left her no alternative but to starve, or to fly from her native land.

Nor let it be supposed that the Protestant population is alone to blame. The Roman Catholics, freed from the operation of the penal laws, are gradually growing in number and importance among the middle classes of society ; but, I regret to say, without exhibiting as a body the higher qualities, which distinguish the middle classes of England and France. The parish priest, too, assumes frequently an unbecoming tone of authority over his flock, which reduces them for the moment to submission, but under which the more energetic minds fret. As one result of this overbearing conduct, I may refer to the indifference to his old religious habits, usually exhibited by the Irish emigrant, when he lands on the continent of America. Among the many inducements to abandon the old country for that land of promise, the prospect of escaping from his spiritual taskmaster at home is not the least considerable. The remedy for this state of things is not to be found, in the dangerous experiment of casting a new burden on the poverty of Ireland, for the education of the priests ; but in improving their means of education, and in assigning to them the position in the country to which they are entitled, as the spiritual guides of so large a portion of the population. A higher class of men would thus be induced to prepare for the priesthood ; and the intercourse between the people and their pastors would be placed on a better and more dignified footing than now.

The gloomy picture I have unfortunately had to place before the reader, of the social state of Ireland, and of the conditions of its religious parties, is, I regret to say, not greatly enlivened, when we turn our view to its

agricultural and industrial prospects. In the keen discussions, to which the land question in Ireland has, of late years, given rise, the interests, real or supposed, of landlord and tenant have received their full share of attention ; but those of the bountiful mother, on whom both landlord and tenant depend for support, have not been treated with the same consideration. The drain on the resources of the soil of Ireland, from the enormous and unceasing export of stock and produce, without any adequate return of the precious materials carried off, is probably without example in modern history ; and, unless vigorous measures be taken to check the evil, Ireland will, at no remote period, have to contend with a greater difficulty than any recorded even in her sad annals. To the eye of the close observer, ominous signs of the land becoming sterile are, in many places, only too visible ; and the continuous flight of the population, from every part of the country, to the distant plains of America, is a clear proof that the tillers of the soil have already arrived at the same conclusion.

The proximity of the north-east of Ireland, to the western coal-fields of Scotland and England, has allowed steam power to be profitably employed, in that part of the country, for manufacturing purposes ; and the climate, as I have before remarked, is highly propitious to the operations of the bleacher. The south, and especially the west, of Ireland are, on the other hand, unfavourably situated for the establishment of manufactures, having no coal-fields of any value of their own, and a long and difficult sea-carriage from England. The drain of emigration, and the facilities for passing over to England, are steadily raising the value of labour, a result most desirable in itself, but which, in the meantime, takes away the only special inducement to the investment of capital.

But there is no cause for despair. Her great neighbour has admitted Ireland to a full participation, in all the advantages afforded by her boundless empire, and is

ready to pour in capital, to any extent, into Ireland itself, if only there is a prospect of a moderate return. Nor can the resources of the country be known, till religious animosity, and agrarian outrage, give way to intelligent enterprise, and steady industry. The heart of the English nation, rising superior to the selfish motives of political leaders, or the narrow views of religious sectaries, is now animated by the best spirit towards the poor people of Ireland, and is willing to make more than ample atonement for all the harsh acts of former times. The increasing power and wealth of the great Continental States, and of the vast American republic, have indeed made a hearty union of all the inhabitants of the British islands, not merely a question of expediency or duty, but one of vital moment to the empire. That modern industry is no longer an heirloom of the Protestant faith, has been clearly proved by the extraordinary progress, in every branch of trade and manufacture, witnessed of late years in France and Belgium. Nor let any one suppose that this progress has been accompanied by indifference to the old religious opinions of those countries. If Lancashire and the ancient cathedral city of Glasgow dispute the palm in Britain, both for industry and Protestant zeal; Belgium and the bishopric of Lyons claim, with equal justice, the foremost place on the continent of Europe, for manufacturing activity and Catholic spirit. The religious sentiment in all these places, however differing in form, cannot be essentially unsound, coexisting as it does with steady and untiring habits of industry, and the honourable ingathering of its fruits. We may, therefore, indulge the hope of better days even for the Roman Catholic people of Ireland. If they are a Celtic race, so are the inhabitants of many provinces of France; and a grander nation than any now living in Europe was either of Celtic blood, or closely allied to it. If they are zealous Catholics, so are the Belgians; if their bishops are Ultra-

montane, so are, if possible, even more conspicuously, the bishops of Belgium. To hear the busy hum of industry resounding throughout all Ireland, will hardly fall to the lot of any man now living; but many of the existing conditions are favourable, and point to this state of things. The example of the humble bee must, however, be followed, and all drones removed from the hive. An army of idle ecclesiastics has been too long maintained, and, like other idle armies, it has been both costly and irritating. If the church grievance were removed, the feelings of animosity among the religious communities would gradually become softened, and the clerical agitator would find his vocation at an end. It is not too much to hope that a religious truce might then be proclaimed, and that those, who have so long held sway in Ireland, would take advantage of it to look calmly into themselves, and, beholding their former sins against a poor and down-trodden race, endeavour to make amends for the errors of the past, by cultivating in the future the virtues of kindness, gentleness, and forbearance. The poor Irish themselves are a hardworking people, and, if gently treated, would doubtless prove as orderly and efficient in civil, as they have shown themselves to be in military, life. It is the duty of all to work hopefully in this great undertaking, and not to expect the evil passions of centuries to be at once subdued, as by a magician's wand. There are many faults in Ireland, which lie beyond the reach of the legislature; there are none which justify a departure from the sound principles of political science. But the Irish Church is a real and substantial grievance, the greatest ecclesiastical abuse now existing in Europe; and its removal, at no distant day, is imperatively called for, in the interest of Ireland, of the Empire, and of Religion itself.

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